

THE 4327 6-37
Reasonable Communicant!

OR, AN
EXPLANATION

Of the DOCTRINE of the

Sacrament
OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER,
In all its Parts, from the
COMMUNION SERVICE.

In a DISCOURSE between a
Minister and one of his *Parishioners*.

By *W. FLEETWOOD*, D.D.
Late Lord Bishop of ELY.

The SIXTEENTH EDITION.

To which is now added,
A SHORT OFFICE for the
HOLY COMMUNION.

L O N D O N:

Printed for B. DOD, Bookseller to *The SOCIETY for*
promoting Christian Knowledge, at the *Bible* and
Key in *Ave-Mary Lane*.

M.DCC.XLVIII.



P



goo
stan
par
fai
the
the
Ser
fre



T H E
P R E F A C E.

HAVING been often called upon, both by my Office, and the Rules of Charity, to assist good People, who were willing to understand and do their Duty, in their Preparation for the Sacrament, I never failed of explaining the latter Part of the Church Catechism, which relates to the Lord's Supper, by the Communion Service, and recommending it to their frequent Reading, and most serious Me-
A 3
dita-

THE PREFACE.

dition; as well knowing that it contained the Whole of what the Church of England requires from her Communicants, both to understand and practise: And being moreover assured, that whoever will speak on this Subject with Authority and Certainty, must speak from thence; it being the publick and allowed Explanation of that Doctrine, and the very Standard by which all other Explanations are to be measured, and accordingly to be either admitted or rejected.

To save myself the Labour of very frequently repeating these Things, I thought of putting them together, in as short and plain a Method as I could, and Printing them, that I might have them to offer easily to such as should think fit to advise with me on these Occasions.

*Whilst I was thus digesting these Things, and putting them in Order,
there*

The P R E F A C E.

III

there occurred to my Mind (and naturally, I thought) some few Particulars, which, although they are not absolutely necessary to the Understanding the Doctrine of the Sacrament, yet I believed they might prove useful to some sort of Christians; and therefore I thought it not unreasonable to intermix them in their proper Places; having found, in the Course of my Experience, that many People had made the same Objections, and asked the same Questions; and therefore that others also might be glad enough to find such Answers and Solutions as are here given.

The Reader will, undoubtedly, find this little Book to differ from many that are written on the same Subject; and it would be strange if it should not, for they differ much from one another. But I still refer to the Standard in all Things where that speaks: And where that is silent, I refer to the Reasonableness of
A 4 *what*

The P R E F A C E.

what is said by me; having had my Eye continually upon the Holy Scriptures, and not being destitute of Authorities for most Particulars, if there had been either need or use of producing them.

Some, it is likely, will conclude, I have made the Duty seem too easy, and thereby have encouraged both the Careless and the Overbusy People of the World, to come to the Lord's Table with less Preparation than otherwise they would have done. To these People I only say, that I intended nothing like it, and have no Reason to think that any such Thing will follow: Men, I hope, will always come to the Sacrament with a true penitent Heart and lively Faith, and then I am sure they will come Worthily. And the easier this is to be done, it is so much the better, certainly. He who represents a general Duty difficult, does his Master neither Honour

The P R E F A C E.

Honour nor Service; but discourages many from Attempting to perform it, who would both attempt it, and perform it, were it but represented easy, in any measure. And it is demonstrable, that no Duty suffers more, on this Account, than that of coming to the Lord's Table; Abundance of People not daring to approach it, for the imaginary Difficulties they think attend it, to One who comes with light and mean Apprehensions of it. However, he who represents Things fairly, can neither be said to make the Duty easy nor difficult, but to shew it as he finds it.

I have not adventured to subjoin any Devotions, Prayers, or Meditations, to this little Book; as well because I intended it not for the Church, but the Closet; as also because there is such Plenty of Books of that Kind, as may very well spare any one else that Labour: The Generality, indeed, of Wri-

The P R E F A C E.

ters on this Subject, having rather made it their Business to raise the Devotion, than inform and settle the Understanding of their Communicants; in which Thing I found no manner of need to follow them.

The Instructions at the End, or Rules of Behaviour during the Solemnity, are to recommend themselves to the Reader by their pure Reasonableness and Fitness; for there is no Authority besides the Rubric, in such Matters, that can enjoin any Thing. But I have always thought, that nothing external could be more edifying and useful, on these Occasions, than a grave, discreet, and proper Carriage; and have therefore insisted much on some such Particulars, as I thought would be most serviceable to that Purpose. For, the Truth of it is, we are such weak and imperfect Creatures, that very little Matters unfix our Attention, disturb our Prayers,
and

The P R E F A C E.

and strangely discompose our Minds, in the midst of our most serious Performances; and therefore every one is to be careful, that he neither disorder himself, or Neighbour, by any thing absurd, unusual, or indecent.

Having given the Reader an Account of these Things, I must desire him, in any doubtful Case, not to take my bare Word, but to consult some faithful and discreet Spiritual Guide upon the Matter, that he may either see Reason to alter his Judgment quite, or stand the more confirmed in it.



T H E



T H E

Reasonable Communicant.

Parishioner.



HAVE, SIR, thought upon
your last Words, " That
" it behoved every Chrif-
" tian of Age and Under-
" standing to come to the
" LORD'S SUPPER, or to provide
" themselves with fuch an Excufe as
" they think will fatisfy CHRIST the
" Judge, when He fhall ask them at
" the Laft Day, Why they did not
" comply with that Command of his,
" the Night before he died, to *Do this*
" *in Remembrance of Him ?*" And the
more I think upon it, the lefs able I
am

2 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

am to find out any such Excuse as, I believe, will satisfy that Judge. And therefore I resolve to lose no more Time, in looking out for an Excuse of my Neglect and Disobedience, but to set about what I believe my Duty, and make Excuses needless. I am indeed of Age more than sufficient, but being of a slow Understanding, and of a very mean Capacity, though I have read much upon this Subject, I entreat You, in your Instructions, to consider me as one very ignorant, and bringing nothing with me, but a Desire to learn, and do what I am bound to do.

Minister. I am very glad it hath pleased God to bring to your Mind what I said, and to inspire you with so wholesome a Resolution as this, of setting about your Duty, is. Assure yourself, you would have lived and died without Excuse, had you neglected

lected it. For, this Command of CHRIST being given to none but the Apostles in Person, will either oblige none else, or necessarily take in all Christians of Age and Understanding: And that the Apostles understood it to oblige all other Christians, as well as themselves, appears from the Practice immediately following, (which is always the best Expounder of a Law) which was, that the Apostles and other Christians met together in Religious Assemblies, and partook alike of the Lord's Supper. And that this was the Custom of the Churches, where the Apostles were not present, appears from the History of the *Corinthians* abusing this Sacrament, 1 *Cor.* chapter xi. as also from the Argument which St *Paul*, from the Christians communicating in Bread and Wine, frames, in 1 *Cor.* x. in order to deter them from eating Things offered to Idols. Now this Communicating being

4 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

ing made, by *St Paul*, in that Argument, a Badge of their belonging to **CHRIST**, as the Eating Things offered to Idols was the Token of an Idolator, it is plain he supposes all Christians obliged, at Time and Place convenient, to communicate. And if it had not been, in his Time, the *Custom* for Christians to come to the Lord's Table, his Argument had had no Force at all in the tenth Chapter. And if it had not been their *Duty* to come to the Sacrament, he should not in the eleventh Chapter have reproved them for coming in so irreverent and disorderly Manner, but have forbidden their coming at all; for why should they commemorate **CHRIST**'s Death *unworthily*, and to their great Peril, since there was no Obligation on them to commemorate it at all? Since therefore he bids them *examine themselves*, and come, he knows it absolutely necessary that they

they should come; and this Necessity could only arise from CHRIST's Command given to the Apostles at his last Supper, and repeated to St *Paul* himself by CHRIST: From all which you may see, that all Christians are certainly obliged to come to the Lord's Table; and that no one should exempt himself from obeying this Command, whom CHRIST hath not exempted: Let them therefore look well to it, who seldom or never partake of the Lord's Supper. GOD be thanked, this will be no longer your Fault: And, I dare say, it must have been a Trouble to you, to have been negligent so long. As to the Instructions you require, I know it is my Duty to do you all the Service I can, in that Particular; but what I shall give you, will be none of *Mine*, but the *Church's* of which you are a Member. I do not think I have Authority enough to say much, of my own Head, in this great Matter;

6 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

Matter; nor will you be any Loser by that; for the Church will say enough, and what it says will be authenticall, and of great Weight; which is more than I can promise of any private Man, any further than he agrees with the Church in her publick Offices. And, for your Understanding, I would not have you distrust it overmuch; for the Matter we are upon, requires no Subtilty or fine Parts; as you may well imagine, when you consider, that this Command of coming to the Lord's Table obliges *all* Christians, High and Low, Rich and Poor, Learned and Ignorant, and therefore must needs be plain and easy to the meanest Capacities. If therefore you shall know, First, *What a Sacrament is.* Secondly, *Why the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was ordained.* Thirdly, *What are the Benefits whereof we are made Partakers thereby.* And lastly, *What is required of them who come to the*
Lord's

Lord's Supper; you will know all that you need to know, and all that the Church requires of you. And this you are to learn from the *Church Catechism*, and the *Communion Service*; which, as it is the plainest and the easiest, so it is, doubtless, the safest Method of Instruction, and what you may most depend upon.

Par. I see a great deal of Reason in what you say, and a great deal of Security in following the Church's Directions, and will therefore seek for no other Help, for Information of my Judgment and Understanding; though I may, perhaps, have recourse to other Helps for expressing my Wants in Prayer, and raising my Devotion. — Let me therefore know, first, “What you mean by the Word *Sacrament*?”

Min.

8 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

Min. “ I mean, an outward and
“ visible Sign of an inward and spiri-
“ tual Grace, given unto us ; ordained
“ by CHRIST Himself, as a Means
“ whereby we receive the same, and
“ a Pledge to assure us thereof.” So
that there are two Parts in a Sacra-
ment, *an outward and visible Sign*,
something that you can see, and some-
thing signified, which you cannot see,
that is to say, an *inward and spiritual*
Grace, which GOD gives to us. And
this outward and visible Sign is instituted
and *ordained by CHRIST Himself*, as
a Means by which we receive this in-
ward and spiritual Grace ; it is the
Instrument, or Conduit, through which
the Grace of GOD is conveyed and
derived to the Souls of Men. And
moreover, this outward and visible
Sign is *as a Pledge* to assure us of that
inward Grace : that is to say, we are
as sure to receive this inward and spi-
ritual

The Reasonable Communicant. 9

ritual Grace, if qualified as CHRIST requires, as we receive the outward and visible Sign. And, since it is the same CHRIST, who instituted the outward Sign, who is to bestow this inward Grace, the duly partaking of the outward Sign must needs be as a *Pledge* to assure us, that we shall receive that inward and spiritual Grace. Thus, for Instance, in the Sacrament of Baptism there are two Things, First, "The outward and visible Sign, or Form, which is Water, wherein the Person is baptized, in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," instituted by CHRIST. Secondly, "The inward and spiritual Grace, which is a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth unto Righteousness; for being by Nature born in Sin, and the Children of Wrath, we are, *by being baptized*, made the Children of Grace." Here the outward and visible Sign, or the being baptized in Water,

10 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

Water, in the Form prescribed, is *the Means*, by which the Party baptized (if rightly qualified by Faith and Repentance) receives the Grace of having his Sins forgiven, and of being adopted one of G O D's Children. And his being thus baptized, is as a *Pledge* to assure him of receiving the Forgiveness of his Sins, and being made a Child of G O D, and Partaker of all the Grace and Favour that belongs to the Relation of a Son.

Par. But may I not here enquire, Whether the *Death unto Sin*, and *new Birth unto Righteousness*, before mentioned, do not intimate the Conditions upon *Man's Part*, on which He enters into Covenant with G O D in Baptism?

Min. Every one indeed, who is baptized, does thereby engage and stipulate to die to Sin, and to live to G O D; that is, to cease from Sin, and live

The Reasonable Communicant. 17

a Life of Righteousness. But the Grace of Baptism, is something bestowed and promised by GOD on his Part, and therefore a *Death unto Sin*, does here signify the Pardon of past Sins to him who is duly baptized, and a *new Birth unto Righteousness*, is the Promise of GOD's Grace to assist the Baptized in living righteously for the Time to come. For every one who is duly qualified, by Faith and Repentance, to come to Baptism, and is duly baptized in the Matter and Manner prescribed by CHRIST, is actually forgiven all his past Sins, and in a State of Grace, and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. And yet, after Baptism, he is also obliged to die to Sin, and to live to GOD: *to crucify the old Man, continually to mortify all his evil and corrupt Affections, and daily to proceed in all Virtue and Godliness of living.* We are by Nature born in Sin, and Children of Wrath, that is, under GOD's Displeasure; but
being

2 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

being baptized, we are made Children of Grace; that is, our past Sins are forgiven, and we are put under G O D's Favour, and we engage in that Covenant to continue so; which cannot be, but by dying to Sin, and living to Righteousness, for the Time to come; which, without G O D's Grace, cannot be done by any of us.

Par. I am very well satisfied with what is said; and, if you please, would now come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in which, I suppose, there must be also two Things; the outward and visible Sign, and the inward and spiritual Grace, the Thing signified. "What is the outward Part, *therefore*, or Sign of the Lord's Supper?"

Min. "Bread and Wine, which the LORD hath commanded to be received;"

“ceived;” that is, to be eaten and drunk by all such as come to his Table.

Par. “What is the inward Part, or Thing signified by this Bread and Wine?”

Min. “The Body and Blood of CHRIST, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord’s Supper.”

Par. I can easily understand, that the Bread broken, should signify the Body of CHRIST broken on the Cross; and that the Wine poured out, should signify the Blood of CHRIST, shed at his Crucifixion: But in good Truth, I cannot comprehend how this Body and Blood should be “verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord’s Supper:” Those Words sound as if we were to eat the natu-

14 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

ral Body, and drink the Natural Blood of CHRIST: I tell you, Sir, these Words puzzle all plain People; what must I do with them, and how must I understand them?

Min. The Church of *England*, in the last Rubrick of the Communion-Service, declares, that “ the Natural Body and “ Blood of CHRIST are in Heaven, and “ not here; it being against the Truth “ of CHRIST’s Natural Body to be, “ at one Time, in more Places than “ one.” And therefore must declare, that we cannot eat and drink CHRIST’s Natural Body and Blood in the Sacrament; so that the Real Presence, maintained by the Church of *England*, is not the Presence of CHRIST’s Natural Body, but of his Spiritual and Mystical one; that is, a Real Presence of CHRIST’s invifible Power and Grace, so in and with the Elements of Bread and Wine, as to convey Spiritual and Real Effects
to

to the Souls of such as duly receive them; as the Church is called the Body of CHRIST, because of his Spirit quickning and enlivening the Souls of Believers. And so the Church of CHRIST did heretofore pray, in the Prayer of Consecration, " That the Spirit of GOD
" coming down upon the Elements of
" Bread and Wine, might make them
" the Body and Blood of CHRIST,
" so that they who received them might
" be filled with the Grace of his Spirit."

Now the closest and the nearest Union of the Spirit of GOD, with the Elements of Bread and Wine, that can be imagined, can never make them the Natural Body and Blood of CHRIST: (For if there be but One Natural Body of CHRIST, nothing else can be that Body:) But the Descent of GOD's Spirit upon, and Union with the Bread and Wine, may make those Elements as communicative of the Grace of CHRIST, and of the Efficacy of his Spirit, as his

16 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

Natural Body was, whilst he lived upon the Earth : and this is what the Church requested in that Form of Prayer.

Par. What therefore would you have me believe distinctly of this Matter ?

Min. That after the Consecration, such a Divine Power and Efficacy doth accompany the Holy Sacrament, as makes the Bread and Wine become the the Spiritual and Mystical Body of CHRIST. And to assure yourself that the Church of *England* knows no Corporal Presence, nor any Change of the Bread and Wine into the Natural Body and Blood of CHRIST, you may observe, that in the First Exhortation of the Communion Service, she tells us,
“ That GOD did not only give his Son
“ JESUS CHRIST to die for us, but
“ also to be our Spiritual Food and
“ Sustenance in that Holy Sacrament.”
Now Spiritual Food and Sustenance is,
doubt-

doubtless, the Food and Sustenance of the Spirit; because, when it is asked in the Catechism, "What are the Benefits
" whereof we are made Partakers by
" the Sacrament?" The Answer is,
" The Strengthening and Refreshing of
" our Souls, by the Body and Blood of
" CHRIST, as our Bodies are by the
" Bread and Wine:" Whereas, if the Natural Body of CHRIST were in the Sacrament, what should hinder it from being as much the Natural Food and Sustenance of our Bodies, as any other Meat and Drink in the World; and so, in the Third Exhortation, we are told, That, "if with a true penitent Heart,
" and lively Faith, we receive that Holy
" Sacrament, then we Spiritually eat the
" Flesh of CHRIST, and drink his
" Blood." Now, to eat and drink Spiritually, is a figurative Expression, and signifies, "the Feeding upon CHRIST's
" Body with our Heart, by Faith;" and so the Church explains it, when the Minister

18 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

nister delivers the Bread to the Communicant, as you may see in that Place. We are therefore as verily and indeed filled with the Grace of CHRIST's Spirit, by duly receiving these Elements, which he calls his Body and Blood, as we should be by eating and drinking his Natural Flesh and Blood; he calls the Bread and Wine his Body and Blood, and he makes them so to all spiritual Intentions and Purposes. And farther than this, there is, I think, no going, consistently with the Declarations of the Church of *England*, both in the Office of Communion, and after it. To say the Bread and Wine, after Consecration, become the true natural Body and Blood of CHRIST, is to destroy the very Nature of the Sacrament, and to make the Sign to be the Thing signified; for if the Bread and Wine be transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of CHRIST, then is the Sign lost, because there is no Bread nor Wine remaining:
Which

Which is not only contrary to Sense, but to the Definition of a Sacrament, which is made up of an outward and visible Sign, as well as of an inward and spiritual Grace. As therefore, in the Sacrament of Baptism, the Water remains still True and Natural Water, after its Sanctification to the mystical washing away of Sin, so do the Elements of Bread and Wine remain still True and Natural Bread and Wine, after the Consecration of them to the End and Use appointed by CHRIST our Saviour. But as in Baptism the Water, when sanctified to that peculiar Use, and used in the Manner prescribed by CHRIST, differs from other common Water, in that it is made, by CHRIST's Blessing and Appointment, the Instrument and Means by which he conveys Forgiveness of Sins past to the truly faithful Penitent, and regenerates him to Newness of Life, for the Time to come; so in the Sacrament of the

20 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

LORD'S Supper, the Elements of Bread and Wine, after Consecration, differ from other Bread and Wine, in that they are called the Body and Blood of CHRIST, and are the Means and Instruments by which CHRIST conveys the Grace of his Spirit to the worthy Communicant. And be assur'd, my Friend, that you can be no Loser by this; for Bread and Wine (or any thing else which it had pleased CHRIST to have chosen) may, by the Blessing and Appointment of GOD, be as communicative of Grace, as the true Natural Flesh and Blood of CHRIST itself can be: For even that (if you could indeed eat it with your Teeth) would no more communicate Grace, or any Blessing to the Receiver, without such Institution and Appointment of GOD, than any other Food in the World that you can eat.

Par.

Par. The Sacraments, therefore, being Matters of meer Institution and Appointment, I am concerned to know no more, either what they are, or how they operate, than it hath pleased G O D to reveal in the Holy Scriptures. And it will be sufficient, you say, to believe, that the consecrated Elements are both called, and made, the Body and Blood of C H R I S T, so verily and indeed, to all Spiritual Intents and Purposes, as to convey to the Faithful Receiver whatever Grace and Blessing C H R I S T hath annexed to the due Performance of these Holy Rites. It is now time to ask, " Why was the Sacrament of the " L O R D's Supper ordained? "

" *Min.* For the continual Remem-
" brance of the Sacrifice of C H R I S T's
" Death, and of the Benefits which we
" receive thereby. "

Par. I suppose then, that at this Time we are most especially to remember, that

22 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

CHRIST died for our Sins; and that the Bread, which signifies his Body, and the Wine his Blood, do put us in Mind that his Body and Blood were broken and shed for us upon the Cross. This is a very easy Thing; is there any thing else in it?

Min. No, nothing else; CHRIST, when he instituted this Sacrament, said only, "Do this in Remembrance of Me:" So all the Evangelists tell us, and mention no other End of this Institution. And so St. Paul, repeating what CHRIST said to himself, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. tells us, — that of the Bread he said,—"Take, eat, this is my Body, which is broken for you, this do in Remembrance of Me." And of the Cup,—"This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in Remembrance of Me." And then explains himself in the Verse following, after this manner, "For as oft as ye eat this Bread, and drink this
" Cup,

“ Cup, ye do shew the LORD’S Death
“ till he come.” After this it will be
no wonder if the Church of *England*
neither declares nor intimates any other
End or Use of the Institution of the
Sacrament, than “ The Commemora-
“ tion of CHRIST’S Death;” for how
should any one know the Will of
CHRIST but by his Words? and what
they are, you have seen. But now attend
to what the Church says. 1st, In the
First Exhortation before the Commu-
nion-Office; “ On *such a Day* (says
“ her Officer) I purpose, by GOD’S
“ Assistance, to administer to all such
“ as shall be religiously and devoutly
“ disposed, the most comfortable Sa-
“ crament of the Body and Blood of
“ CHRIST, to be by them received, in
“ Remembrance of his meritorious Cross
“ and Passion; whereby alone we obtain
“ Remission of our Sins, and are made
“ Partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven.”
Then in the Second Exhortation;

And

24 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

“ And as the Son of G O D did vouch-
“ safe to yield up his Soul by Death
“ upon the Crofs, for your Salvation, so
“ is it your Duty to receive the Com-
“ munion, in Remembrance of the
“ Sacrifice of his Death, as he him-
“ self hath commanded.” And in the
Third Exhortation, thus ; “ And to
“ the End that we should always re-
“ member the exceeding great Love
“ of our Master and holy Saviour
“ J E S U S C H R I S T, thus dying for us,
“ and the innumerable Benefits which
“ by his precious Blood-shedding he
“ hath obtained to us, he hath in-
“ stituted and ordained Holy Myfte-
“ ries, as Pledges of his Love, and
“ for a continual Remembrance of his
“ Death, to our great and endless Com-
“ fort.” And so in the Prayer of
Consecration ; — “ Who did institute,
“ and in his Holy Gospel command
“ us to continue a perpetual Memory
“ of that his precious Death, until his
“ coming

“ coming again.” And three or four Lines after ; — “ According to thy Son, “ our Saviour JESUS CHRIST’s holy “ Institution, in Remembrance of his “ Death and Passion.” And when the Minister delivers the Bread to each Communicant, he says, “ Take, and “ eat this, in Remembrance that “ CHRIST died for thee.” And of the Cup, “ Drink this, in Remembrance “ that CHRIST’s Blood was shed for “ thee.”

Par. Since then the Scriptures, the Church Catechism, and the Communion-Office, speak of no other End of CHRIST’s Instituting the Sacrament, than for the Remembrance of his Death ; I need not be concerned either to enquire after any other End, or to believe there is any other, whatever private People may offer in their Discourses on this Subject.

Min.

26 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

Min. You take me right: There is no other End declared by CHRIST, nor by the Church of *England*, of the Institution of the Sacrament, than to come to his Table, to take and eat Bread, and drink Wine (made to the faithful Receiver CHRIST'S Body and Blood) in Remembrance of CHRIST'S Death and Sufferings: but this must not hinder you from doing all that is previously necessary to qualify you to commemorate this precious Death *worthily*.

Par. That I apprehend: Nor must I commemorate this Death, barely as the Death of CHRIST, but as He was *a Sacrifice for Sin*; that is, if I understand it right, his Life was offered up to GOD, upon the Cross, for the Expiation of the Sins of the World, and for the Atonement of GOD'S Anger; just as the Lives of Beasts were,
under

under the *Mosaical* Dispensation, offer'd for the Expiation of such and such Offences, upon which the Party offending was acquitted of whatever Legal Guilt he had contracted. When therefore I commemorate the Death of CHRIST, I must remember, not only that he died, but that his Life was offered up to GOD a *Sacrifice*, and was accepted of him for the Sins of the whole World. This the Scripture assures us of, in many Places; and this the Church expresses in the Prayer of Consecration, thus: "That
" GOD, of his tender Mercy, gave
" his only Son JESUS CHRIST, to
" suffer Death upon the Cross, for our
" Redemption; who made there (by
" his own Oblation of himself once
" offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient
" Sacrifice, Oblation, and Satisfaction,
" for the Sins of the whole World."
This I understand, by commemorating CHRIST'S Death as a Sacrifice, or
the

28 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

the Sacrifice of CHRIST'S Death ; And I hope this is sufficient ; for I do not care in how small a Compass my Belief lies, provided it be *all that is truly necessary.*

Min. You have read the Communion Service well, and made good Use of it ; and indeed you need to go no farther : For all you have to do, is to remember and believe, that CHRIST died, and that his Life was offered up a Sacrifice to God, for the Forgiveness of the Sins of all the World, and was sufficient for that Purpose.

Par. “ But what are the Benefits “ whereof we are made Partakers by “ receiving this Sacrament ? ” for tho' I come to it, because commanded, and do there (as I am also bid) commemorate the Sacrifice of CHRIST'S Death, yet what Advantage is it so to commemorate CHRIST'S Death ?

Min.

Min. The Benefits of CHRIST'S Death are numberless and inestimable; it is the Fountain and Foundation of all GOD'S Mercies, which he either bestows on Men in this Life, or promises in the other. And, doubtless, the Benefits of duly commemorating this Death are also very great; and therefore the Church's Answer to this Question is, — "The Strengthening and Refreshing of the Soul by the Body and Blood of CHRIST, as our Bodies are by the Bread and Wine." The Death of CHRIST, is as much the Life of the Soul, as Bread and Wine are the Life and Sustenance of the Body. Bread, you know, is the Staff of Life, and Wine is that which cheareth the Heart of Man, and supporteth his Spirit; and they are put here to signify the whole Sustenance of Man's Life: As therefore a Man's Body cannot be supported and main-

30 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

maintained with Strength and Vigour, without the Sustenance of Bread and Wine; so does the Life of the Soul consist in Faith on the SON of GOD, and would without it languish away and die. These, you see, are figurative Expressions, and must be so by reason the Soul cannot properly be said either to *eat* or *drink*. But it is easy enough to understand, that as Man's Body lives by Meat and Drink, so does his Soul by Faith in GOD, and Hope of his Promises; and that, as when the Body is faint and languishing, it is supported and revived by Bread and Wine; so is the Soul of a poor penitent Offender (when fainting under the Weight of its Guilt) strengthened, refreshed, and quickned again to Life, by remembering what CHRIST has suffered for his Sake, how He died to redeem his Soul, to make Satisfaction to GOD for all his Sins, and reconcile him to Him. And therefore to commemorate the Benefits of CHRIST'S Death, must needs

needs be the Refreshment, Comfort, and Support of a Man's Spirit, and the very Life of his Soul. But you will have a fuller View of all these Spiritual Advantages, by Reading the second Prayer after the Receiving of the Sacrament, wherein the Communicants give Thanks to G O D (by the Mouth of the Minister) " for that he vouchsafes to feed
" those, who have duly received those
" holy Mysteries, with the Spiritual
" Food of the most precious Body and
" Blood of C H R I S T, and does assure
" them thereby of his Favour and
" Goodness towards them, and that
" they are very Members incorporate
" in the Mystical Body of his S O N;
" which is the blessed Company of all
" Faithful People; and are also Heirs,
" through Hope, of his Everlasting
" Kingdom, by the Merits of the most
" precious Death and Passion of his
" dear S O N." In which Words, the Church numbers up the Benefits that
accrue

32 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

accrue to the worthy Receiver. *1st*, They are fed with the Spiritual Food of CHRIST's Body and Blood. *2dly*, They are assured thereby of GOD's Favour and Goodness towards them. *3dly*, They are Members of CHRIST's Mystical Body, *i. e.* the Church, of which CHRIST is the Head: And, *4thly*, Heirs of Salvation. Now, tho' we are made in Baptism, Members of CHRIST, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven; yet was it for the Merit of CHRIST's Death and Sufferings, that GOD was pleased to enter into Covenant with us in Baptism, and thereby gave us a Right to all those Benefits and Privileges. And therefore we have seen that the Sacrament was ordained for the Commemoration of the Sacrifice of CHRIST's Death, and for Commemoration of the Benefits that we receive by that Death; and the Commemoration of these Benefits are, in Truth, the

Strength-

Strengthening and Refreshing of the Soul, as Peoples Bodies are refreshed by Bread and Wine. To think, remember, and believe, that by duly Receiving these blessed Elements, we are fed with the Spiritual Food of CHRIST's Body and Blood, that we are thereby assured of GOD's Favour, Members of CHRIST's Church, and Heirs, through Hope, of Everlasting Salvation; to remember, I say, these Honours and Advantages, must strengthen and refresh the Souls of humble Sinners, as much as Bread and Wine can do their Bodies. You must bear with the Repetition of these Matters, in order to your better understanding them, and their being the better impressed on your Mind.

Par. I thank you, Sir, and perceive I am no Loser by the frequent inculcating of the same Thing. Let me now, if you please, give you a short Summary of what you have discoursed of, that you may see, whether I have understood

34 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

derstood and taken you right. " I find
" myself indispensably obliged, by
" CHRIST's Command, to come to
" the Sacrament of the LORD's Sup-
" per, and I do not see what can ex-
" cuse me from doing so, being of
" Age and Understanding, and having
" convenient Opportunity. When I
" come there, I am to do as CHRIST
" bad his Disciples do, take the Ele-
" ments of Bread and Wine, and eat
" the one, and drink the other, in Com-
" memoration of CHRIST's Death.
" The Bread, I understand, is, by the
" Appointment of CHRIST, to fig-
" nify his Body, and the Wine his
" Blood. And when I eat the Bread,
" I am to remember that CHRIST's
" Body was cruelly used, nailed to the
" Cross, wounded, and pierced. And
" when I drink the Wine, I am to re-
" member that his Blood was shed
" and poured out upon that Cross.
" This Death of CHRIST, I am to
" look

“ look upon as an Expiatory Sacrifice,
“ which he offered up to GOD upon
“ the Cross, for the Sins of all Man-
“ kind, and for mine in particular
“ amongst the rest, if I take Care to
“ qualify myself as He requires. This
“ Bread and Wine, thus blessed and
“ consecrated to this particular Use, I
“ am not, you say, to consider as com-
“ mon Bread and Wine; nor yet to
“ think they are at all changed in
“ their Nature; but to call them the
“ Body and Blood of CHRIST, and
“ to believe they will (if worthily re-
“ ceived) convey to me the Benefits
“ of CHRIST’S Death and Passion.”
This *Virtual* Presence of CHRIST’S
Body and Blood I can understand, and
it is *Real* as to all spiritual Intents
and Purposes; for GOD, I am sure,
can as well convey his Grace to my
Soul, and make me a Partaker of the
Benefits of CHRIST’S Death, by these
Elements, which, being blessed, signify
and

36 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

and represent his Body and Blood, as by his Natural Flesh and Natural Blood, if I could eat the one, and drink the other. Farther than this, I am glad to hear you think the Church of *England* does not go. But since all these great Advantages and Spiritual Benefits accrue only to him, who comes to this Table of the Lord, *duly and worthily prepared*, it is most necessary that I ask, in the last Place, — “ What is required
“ of them, who come to the LORD’s
“ SUPPER? ”

Min. “ To examine themselves, whether they truly repent them of their
“ former Sins ; stedfastly purposing to
“ lead a new Life, have a lively Faith
“ in GOD’s Mercy, through CHRIST,
“ with a thankful Remembrance of
“ his Death, and be in Charity with
“ all Men.”

Par.

Par. A great Work, I assure you, if every Thing be considered particularly.

Min. Be not frightened ; it is no more than what all Christians are always obliged to, as well when they come not to the Sacrament, as when they come to it,

Par. What is it “ truly to repent of
“ all my former Sins ? ”

Min. I will tell you, in the Words of the Church, in her *First Exhortation*. It is, “ To examine your Life
“ and Conversation by the Rule of
“ God’s Commandments: and where-
“ insoever you shall perceive yourself
“ to have offended, either by Will,
“ Word, or Deed, there to bewail
“ your own Sinfulness, and confess
“ your self to ALMIGHTY GOD,

C

“ with

38 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

“ with full Purpose of Amendment.” Nothing can possibly be plainer. You must bethink yourself, how you have spent your Life past, and what Commands of G O D you have transgressed, and what you have neglected; what you have done which was forbidden by G O D, and what you have not done which was commanded. This your Conscience (if you be in earnest) will, upon some short Reflection, bring to Memory: And for this, you must implore G O D’s Mercy, and beseech Him, for C H R I S T’s Sake, to forgive you.

Par. Is it enough then to confess my Sins to G O D, and to be unfeignedly concern’d and sorrowful for having offended Him? Is this to have repented?

Min.

Min. You must remember, that our Sins are against God, and against our Neighbour: And that Repentance implies not only *Sorrow* for Sin, but an Endeavour to *undo*, as far as we can, whatever we have done amiss. Now, in all Sins that are so done, as nothing of them can be undone, nor any Amends made for them, there to confess them, and be sorry for them, is sufficiently to repent of them, because it is all that a Man can do; where a Man can do more, more will be expected from him: for Repentance is the undoing, as much as we can, what we have done amiss. And if you remember this, you will easily see what Repentance will suffice for almost all Sins. It is therefore for such Sins (whether against God or Man, or both) as cannot be undone, nor other Amends made for them, that the Church calls upon you, “to

40 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

“ bewail them, and confess yourself to
“ GOD with full Purpose of Amend-
“ ment.” But for other Offences, the
Church directs you otherwise. “ If
“ (saith she) you shall perceive your
“ Offences to be such, as are not only
“ against GOD, but also against your
“ Neighbours, then you shall reconcile
“ yourself unto them, being ready to
“ make Restitution and Satisfaction, ac-
“ cording to the utmost of your Power,
“ for all Injuries and Wrongs done by
“ you to any other ; and being like-
“ wise ready to forgive others that
“ have offended you, as you would
“ have Forgiveness of your Offences at
“ GOD’S Hands.

Par. But what if I am able to make
no Restitution, or Satisfaction at all,
for the Injury I have done my Neigh-
bour? Must I not come to the Sa-
crament, provided I acknowledge and
confess my Sin to GOD, and promise,
in

in my Mind, to make Amends, whenever I am able?

Min. Yes certainly, for this is all the Repentance you can shew, under your Inability of making Satisfaction; and such a Resolution of being just and honest, is sufficient, till you are able to put it in Execution.

Par. But, supposing I have wrong'd a Man, (as for Instance, my Master, when I was his Servant, and trusted by him) by defrauding him of Goods or Money, or any Thing valuable, and am now convinced of my Fault in doing so, and would make him Restitution if I could, but find I am not able: Am I obliged to confess my Fault to him, before I come to the Sacrament? Does Repentance certainly include Confession to the *Party injured*? The Case, I doubt, is common, but I know it was my own Case certainly:

42 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

tainly: And what would you advise in it?

Min. If your Confession would do your Master, or any one else, any Service, I would not only *advise* it, but *enjoin* it to you. As for Example, If your Confession would shew your Master some particular Cases, where his Servants, or others whom he trusts, may over-reach or defraud him, of which he is not aware, and understands not; there, you see your Confession would be of use to him, and preserve him from others Injuries; and there, I would advise you to give him Information, that he may be more secure for the future. But this may be done under-hand, and in Generals, without discovering yourself, and your particular Frauds; because, as the Case may happen, such Discovery may do him no Service, and yourself much Mischief; and where no Good can come to the
Party

Party injured by a Confession, there I can see no need of it.

Par. May I also make Restitution when I am able, without discovering my Name to the Party injured?

Min. You may, where the Injury done is fully satisfied by Restitution. As for Example: You have wronged such an one of fifty Crowns, or to the Value of that Sum; the Injury here is the Loss of so much Money: when therefore this Loss is made up, the Injury is removed; what Good would it do, to let the Party know *who* it was that wronged him? It might do you some Mischief, but I think it could do him no Service. If he suspected and impleaded you at Law, and you were cast, you would be obliged to pay the Costs, and also to confess your Fault, because you would here clear your Adversary of false Accusation, and justify

44 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

the Sentence of your Judges, which is a great Good to the Commonwealth.

Par. I see the Reason of what you say. But what was the other Case, where I should be obliged to confess my secret Fraud, though I could not, at that Time, make Restitution?

Min. If your Master did either publicly accuse, or very strongly suspect another Person, of doing him that Wrong, which you indeed did him: Here you would be obliged to clear that innocent Person, and free him from the Trouble and Injury of being falsely accused, or ill thought of; and also your Master would be freed from doing Injury, by falsely accusing, or unjustly suspecting, an innocent Person. Here, you perceive, you would do Justice, and a great deal of Good, by your Discovery and Confession. But in Cases where no Good would come, but Mis-
chief,

chief, by Confession of your Fault to the injured Party, there, I imagine, you may rest satisfied with Confession to GOD, and a Purpose of Restitution when you are able.

Par. I thought Confession had been always necessary; but I perceive, that where it would answer no good End, there it may be better spared, and without Sin. And therefore let me put the Case, that I had polluted my Neighbour's Bed, and thereby injured three Parties most notoriously; *Him*, his *Wife*, and *My own*: I must not, by this Rule, confess my Offence to them.

Min. Consider how much Mischief such a Confession might do to your Neighbour, and to your own Wife, and how little Good; and then you will see the Reason of the Rule. You would break the Peace and Happiness of two Families during their whole

103

C 5

Lives,

46 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

Lives, and, it may be, occasion a world of Mischief from the Rage of Jealousy, and the Sense of such great Injuries. But mistake me not quite, I discharge you from confessing this Sin either to the abused Husband, or to your own abused Wife; but I should lay it strictly on you to confess your Sin to your wicked Partner, and let her know (but with all Secrecy) how much you are concerned at your Transgression, and how sincerely you repent of it; and how you wish that she would do so too. This Confession I would never excuse you from, because it would be the likeliest Method to reclaim your sinful Partner, and undo the Mischief you have done; and truly, I cannot see how you could repent in earnest of this Sin, without endeavouring to amend those whom you had been so instrumental in corrupting and undoing. And yet I would excuse you even from this, if there were manifest Danger

ger of the abused Husband's discovering the Falshood of his Wife, by your Confession. You see, I make the good Effects of Confession, to be the Reason of making it; and therefore where a greater Mischief would probably ensue from it, I cannot think it necessary. But it must then be made to God, with greater Sorrow and Concern, if it be possible.

Par. But what if I should have sinned with common Prostitutes, and such as make a Trade of it, and who cannot be presumed ignorant of their Sin?

Min. The Case is somewhat otherwise there; and you must judge what Likelihood there is of your Advice's succeeding with such People; for where you think they know their Way is sinful, and Counsel would have no Effect, there, I believe, you
are

48 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

are under no Obligation to give them Warning.

Par. The Sum therefore of what you say is, I think, this — That Confession and Restitution are the two external Tokens of Repentance — and that the Rule and Measure of Confession (to the Parties injured) is, the Benefit and Good that would come by it. And the Rule and Measure of Restitution is, a Man's Ability of making it. So that where Mischief, and no Good, would come by Confession, there I may repent without Confession, except to G O D. And where I am able to make no Restitution, there I may repent sincerely without it; and so may come to the holy Sacrament, though I have done much Wrong and Injury. I wish I could supply these great Defects with a proportionable Share of *Sorrow* for my Sins: Can you

you tell what is proper to excite and raise it in me : For methinks I am too cold and unconcerned in this Matter ?

Min. Endeavour to possess your Mind with a true Sense of the Heinousness of Sin, by considering, That GOD, who gave you Life and Being, and made you to be happy, is so displeased with Sin, that He resolves, for its Sake, not only to deprive you of the Happiness He intended for you, but to make you miserable beyond Expression, and that for ever, in the World to come. Think with yourself, *who* CHRIST the LORD was, and *what* He has done and suffered, to redeem you from the Guilt and Punishment of Sin ; and you will have another kind of Notion and Opinion of the Heinousness of Sin, than you can have from either its natural Turpitude,

50 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

tude, or from the Mischief it does in the World, though both those Things are considerable. The whole Oeconomy of Christianity were a very strange Thing, unless Sin be the most heinous and abominable Thing that can be before G O D. And therefore when you would work in yourself a true Sense of the Heinousness of Sin, you must consider what is threatned to it, and what was done by CHRIST (the Eternal Son of G O D) to save you from it.

Par. But this kind of Sorrow looks (methinks) rather like Sorrow for the *Effects* of G O D's Displeasure, which are *Loss* and *Punishment*; than Sorrow for the *Occasion* of that Displeasure, which is *Sin*. I own, SIR, I am very sorry for my Sins, when I consider what a Loser I am like to be by them, and how much I must suffer

The Reasonable Communicant. 51

fer for them; but this is being sorry wholly for my own Sake.

Min. Be content, SIR, to do what you can, and as well as you can. It would take up a world of Time, to perswade you to be exceeding sorrowful for your Sins, if your Sins would do you no Mischief, and procure you no Punishment.

Par. I think so too. But yet, I have I know not what kind of Concern about me, that my Sorrow for Sin should proceed from no nobler and better Principle than the Fear of Punishment. And you must know, much better than I, how all sorts of Writers and Discourses decry the Repentance that proceeds from *Fear of Punishment*.

Min. Never think of setting up for a Man of Honour in Religion: Trust

to

52 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

to the Principles that GOD hath implanted in you, which are, *Hope*, and *Desire of Good*, and *Fear*, and *Hate of Evil*: And trust to the Rules that GOD hath set you in his holy Word, to guide and direct yourself by. If GOD exhort you to such and such Things, and promise you to reward your Performance of them with such and such Blessings, think with yourself, whether you may not set about those Actions, in view of those Rewards, and for the sake of those Blessings. If GOD prohibit you such and such Things, and tell you, if you venture on them, He will punish you in this and that Manner; think with yourself, whether you may not abstain from those Things for fear of being so punished. These are plain Things, let them never slip out of your Mind. Nor let the Reverence of any Man (though it were St *Austin* himself)

cause

cause you to forget, that the Scriptures are made up of Promises and Threats, both which would signify nothing, if Men might not be moved by them, both to perform their Duty, and obtain their Recompence, and to avoid both Guilt and Punishment. Now the same Promises being made to *Repentance*, which are made to *Innocence*, and *Obedience*, and the same Threatnings denounced to *Impenitence*, which are denounced to *Sin* and *Wickedness*; 'tis evident, that Men may repent and turn to God upon the same Principles, by which they might have continued innocent and obedient, viz. the Promises of Blessings, and the Threats of Mischief, Pain and Misery; the one to excite their Hope, the other to awaken their Fear, and both to secure their Obedience. But if you can repent upon any better, or (as you call them) nobler Principles, you may. I am
only

54 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

only trying to shew you, that the Repentance proceeding from Fear of Punishment is safe, and will be acceptable with GOD, as being both natural and reasonable. I would have you only distrust *that Fear*, that drives Men from their Duty, not that which urges them to it.

Par. I can, and do consider Sin, as a Thing offensive before GOD, unworthy of myself, against my Reason and better Knowledge, and against express Command; and upon these Accounts, I am somewhat troubled for having committed it; but this Sorrow, I confess, does not arise so high, as the Considerations of the Danger it exposes me to carry it; and therefore I am very glad to hear it is so justifiable and safe; and indeed my Reason cannot disprove any thing you have said in its Excuse; I will try henceforwards not to be discouraged by any one's

Autho-

Authority, affirming the contrary, if it be against Reason and without Scripture: And in the mean Time, by the Grace of G o d, will try to fortify my Resolutions of Obedience and Repentance, with the best Considerations I can, besides the Fear of Punishment. This Sorrow therefore for having offended G o d, and Restitution where I am able to make it, and the Purpose of making Amends when I am able, will, I hope, include the whole of my Repentance for Sins past. The next Thing required of me is, You say, "stedfastly" to purpose to lead a new Life:—and that refers to the Time to come. The Meaning of this is, I imagine, that I resolve in great earnest to amend in all Particulars, wherein I have found myself, upon Examination, faulty. If I have stolen, I will steal no more: If I have been guilty of Lying, Slandering, Swearing, Blaspheming, Drunkenness, Intemperance, and Impurity; I will

56 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

will henceforward study to speak the Truth, and to avoid those Sins, and all Occasions of falling into them, and be continually upon my Guard against all the natural and usual Temptations to them. But what, if when I have made these Resolutions of falling no more into these Sins, I should be so wicked as to break them; What must I do then? I have Reason enough, God knows, to apprehend with Fear, that this (which is so common) may be my Case; and with what Heart can one, who has often resolved against his Sins, and often broke them deliberately, resolve again to keep them?

Min. Assure yourself, that you have nothing else to do, in such a Case, but to resolve again to keep those Resolutions you have often broken. The Breach of good Resolutions is certainly as pardonable as other Sins, and, if repented of, will certainly be pardoned;

ed; and therefore let not your frequent failing discourage you from attempting again and again, till you have gained your Point. Remember there is nothing else to do; 'tis absolutely necessary you should resolve, until your Resolutions take Effect.

Par. The *Third* Thing requisite to the coming worthily to the Sacrament, is, "To have a lively Faith in GOD'S Mercies through CHRIST." What may the Meaning of that be?

Min. To believe in great earnest, that GOD was so exceedingly gracious and merciful to Mankind, that He gave his only Son to die for the Redemption of them, and to purchase the Pardon of all the Sins, which they shall truly repent of, and leave.

Par. Is it then absolutely necessary that I, and every one who comes to the

58 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

the Sacrament, should certainly believe our Sins are forgiven upon Repentance?

Min. Not only at the Sacrament, but at any other Time, whoever truly repents of his Sins, shall certainly, for CHRIST'S Sake, be forgiven. The Promise of Forgiveness of Sins is made by GOD, in JESUS CHRIST, to Repentance; if therefore you believe you have truly repented, you cannot possibly distrust the Performance of Covenants on GOD'S Part. But it is possible you may distrust the Performance of your own Part, and the Truth and Sincerity of your Repentance; and then you cannot but distrust the Forgiveness of your Sins on GOD'S Part. And that is not want of Faith, nor any Fault, for GOD only promises Forgiveness to Repentance. As far therefore as you distrust the Sincerity of your Repentance, so far you will distrust
your

your Forgiveness; but you see that such a Distrust charges G O D with neither want of Truth, nor want of Mercy or Goodness; and therefore is no way faulty with respect to Him.

Par. But may I come to the Sacrament with a Distrust of the Truth of my Repentance, since in the *first* Exhortation I find these Words —

“ It is requisite, that no Man should
“ come to the holy Communion, but
“ with a full Trust in G O D’s Mercy,
“ and with a quiet Conscience? ” —

Now, though I have no manner of Distrust of G O D’s Mercy in general, yet if I cannot apply it to myself in particular, how should I have a *quiet Conscience*? And I can never apply G O D’s Mercy to myself by Faith, whilst I distrust the Truth and Sincerity of my own Repentance.

Min.

Min. A *quiet Conscience* does, indeed, entirely depend upon the *Opinion* a Man has of his Repentance being sincere, and accepted of G O D: But, because a Man may mistake his Case, a quiet Conscience is not always a *secure State* with respect to G O D: For if a Man believe he has repented truly, and yet has not, he is never the nearer Pardon for thinking himself pardoned: And if he be fearful he has not repented as he ought, he may yet have done so, notwithstanding his Fear, and consequently be pardoned of G O D, although he think he is not pardoned. So that 'tis plain a Man may have a quiet Conscience, when he is really in great Danger; and a troubled Conscience, when he is indeed forgiven, and secure of G O D's Favour; and you can never believe that G O D will judge Men finally, by their present Assurance, or Despondency, but by the

Truth

Truth and the Sincerity of their Repentance. The Church does not therefore understand by a *quiet Conscience*, a full Assurance in every one that his Repentance is so perfect and sufficient, that it must certainly be accepted of GOD; but such a Trust in GOD's Mercy, as that if a Man be duly qualified, he shall be certainly accepted of Him, and forgiven. Some Mens Sins may be of such a Nature, as that they shall be sorely perplex'd to understand what sort of Repentance is necessary to the obtaining Forgiveness; and to this End, they are called upon to advise with their Spiritual Guides, who are presumed to be able to instruct them, and set them right. Others are so overwhelmed with the Sense of their Sins, that they think they are too great for GOD's Pardon; and these People are also advised to come to their Pastors, that they may learn the true Extent of GOD's Mercies in JESUS CHRIST,

D

and

62 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

and what it is will qualify them for Forgiveness of their Sins. This is the *quiet Conscience* that the Church requires of her Communicants, a Conscience well informed of the Nature of GOD's Promises and Threats, and of the Nature of Repentance, and of its own State and Condition.

Par. If I understand you right, you say, that *the Quiet* of a Man's Conscience depends upon his *Opinion* and *Persuasion*; but his *Safety* and *Security*, upon his *Practice*; GOD accepts him, not according to what he believes of himself, but according to what he *does*, and truly *is*. If, therefore, upon a serious Examination of my Life past, I find I am in earnest very much concerned for having offended GOD, and stedfastly purpose to do so no more, and, by the Assistance of his Grace, resolve to lead a new and better Life for the Time to come, and firmly believe

believe that if I do so, GOD will, for CHRIST's sake, accept of my Repentance, and enable me more and more to walk carefully before Him: If I do thus, I may, you say, come to the Sacrament, although I may be still afraid of the Deceitfulness of my own Heart, and of the Truth and Sincerity of my Repentance, having often broken my good Resolutions before, and fallen again into my old Sins: This Fear and Doubting of myself will not prejudice me at all.

The Thing that follows is, "To bear a thankful Remembrance of CHRIST's Death:" That is, I suppose, that when I commemorate the Death and Sufferings of CHRIST, in the Sacrament, I must lift up my Heart to GOD, and thank Him for giving his Son JESUS CHRIST to die for me; I see a great deal of Reason for so doing, for if He had not

D 2

died,

64 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

died, I must have perished; I can never therefore remember his Death, without remembring the Deliverance I obtain by it; and as I value that, so I shall certainly be thankful.

Min. You say right: Remember by what Means you have escaped Death, and shall obtain Life and Happiness everlasting, and that will raise your Gratitude to GOD, who hath done so great Things for you. The Church lays mighty Stress upon this thankful Heart, as there is great Reason, and it will be to your Use to observe it. — In the first Exhortation — She says, “ It is
“ our Duty to render most humble and
“ hearty Thanks to Almighty GOD,
“ our heavenly Father, for that He
“ hath given his Son our Saviour JE-
“ SUS CHRIST, not only to die for
“ us, but also to be our spiritual Food
“ and Sustenance in that holy Sacra-
“ ment.” And in the third Exhortation;

The Reasonable Communicant. 65

tation; " Above all Things, you must
" give most humble and hearty Thanks
" to GOD the FATHER, the SON,
" and the HOLY GHOST, for the
" Redemption of the World, by the
" Death and Passion of our Saviour
" CHRIST, both GOD and Man." —
And at the End of the same, — " To
" Him therefore, with the FATHER,
" and the HOLY GHOST, let us
" give (as we are most bounden) con-
" tinual Thanks." And in the Ser-
vice — the Priest exhorts, " Let us
" give Thanks unto our LORD GOD;"
And the People answer — " It is meet
" and right so to do." So when the
Bread is delivered — " Take, and eat
" this, in Remembrance that CHRIST
" died for thee, and feed on Him in
" thy Heart by Faith with Thankf-
" giving." And when the Cup, —
" Drink this, in Remembrance that
" CHRIST'S Blood was shed for thee,
" and be thankful." And in the Pray-

66 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

ers after, we desire of GOD, " That
 " He would mercifully accept our
 " Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiv-
 " ing ;" and heartily " thank Him
 " for that He does vouchsafe to feed
 " us,&c." From all which Passages, you
 will easily conclude, the LORD's Sup-
 per to be *a Feast of Joy and Gratitude.*
 And therefore I should be glad you
 would come to it without those Fears
 and dreadful Apprehensions, that ap-
 pear so visibly in the Countenance and
 Behaviour of many good, devout Peo-
 ple, who, I dare say, have no true
 Cause for such a Concern.

Par. I suppose it proceeds from their
 Humility, and a deep Sense of their
 Unworthiness, and I hope there is no
 Harm or Danger in it; it is as like to
 be my Case, as any Body's else.

Min. No, none at all: I do not
 blame it by any Means: But if you
 will

will be advised by me, you shall endeavour to avoid it; for Fears distract the Attention, and the Mind is bewildered by them, and considers not the Work it is about, so well as it desires to do. Think, that though you are a grievous Sinner, yet God is infinitely merciful: Think, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but be saved: And you are now commemorating that Death, that has made Atonement for the Sins of the whole World. These Considerations may dispel all your Fears; but if they do not, there is no Harm in them; it will be your Misfortune to want those Comforts that you might well have; but there is neither Fault nor Danger in wanting them: The *Heart* is as *secure*, but not as *easy*, under *Fear*, as under *Joy* and good Assurance. Repent but truly of your Sins, and leave them, and the Work is done; the rest is to

68 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

be left to G O D, in whose good Hands you never will miscarry, how fearful soever you may be of your Condition.

Par. G O D be thanked, that our Safety depends not on our Hopes or Fears, but upon his infinite Goodness, accepting what He himself enables us to do. Let us come, if You please, to the *last Thing* requisite; and that is, “the being in Charity with all Men.” What if my Friend prove false, injurious, and endeavour to undo me? Must I still trust him, love him, and favour him as I used to do? What if he seek to take away my Estate, to hurt my Reputation, or assault my Person? Must I endure this patiently, and seek no Remedy, but treat him still in the friendly Manner I was wont?

Min. No, nothing of all this: Christianity obliges you to hate no Man; to do no Man any Injury; to *seek* no Revenge; nor to *take* any, though it might

might be done with Secrefy and Safety: Nay, it obliges you to pray to God for the Forgiveness of fuch, as may have injured you in the higheft Measure; and obliges you to deny them nothing that is due in Juftice, in Humanity, and Mercy. Their Enmity and ill Ufage will never excufe you from doing them any fort of good Turns that are due to them, as Men or Christians. But this will not hinder you from defending yourfelf from any Injury or Violence, from recovering what is your own, nor from bringing upon them whatever Mifchief the Laws will inflict upon Transgreffors. Chriftianity will not hinder you from breaking off Friendfhip with one, who has fhewed himfelf unworthy of it; much lefs will it require you to continue him in that Confidence and Truft, he has heretofore been in, but forfeited by Falfhood and ill Ufage. In a word, you muft not *bate*, but you may *diflike*,

70 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

any one that injures your Reputation, Fortune, or your Person. You may cease your Friendship, but not your Readiness to do all good Offices : If you have injured any one, you must be reconciled, and make Amends ; and if any one has injured you, you must pray to God to forgive them, and so forgive them yourself, as to return them no Evil for Evil, nor take any Advantage against them to their Prejudice. And if your Adversary be unreasonable, and will not be reconciled to you, 'tis enough that you desire it, and shew yourself disposed to it. It would be difficult and endless to tell you what you should do in as many Cases as may easily happen ; if you find yourself at a stand, you had best communicate your Case to some prudent and good spiritual Guide, who will easily tell you what is to be done in the Matter. Remember only, that to be on the forgiving Side, is Wisdom, and

and Pleasure, and Superiority; it is to do bravely, and to be a good Christian.

Par. And this, you say, is all I have to do.

Min. You see the *Catechism* says so; and the first Exhortation before the *Communion* says so. And so does the Third, which is always read—“ Judge
“ therefore yourselves, Brethren, that
“ you be not judged of the LORD—
“ Repent you truly for your Sins
“ past — have a lively and stedfast
“ Faith in CHRIST your Saviour —
“ Amend your Lives — and be in
“ perfect Charity with all Men — so
“ shall you be meet Partakers of those
“ holy Mysteries.” And when this
Exhortatory Prayer is done — the
Church begins again — “ Ye that do
“ truly and earnestly repent you of
“ your Sins, — and are in Love and
“ Charity

“ Charity with your Neighbours —
 “ and intend to lead a new Life,
 “ following the Commandments of
 “ GOD, and walking from hence-
 “ forth in his holy Ways, — draw
 “ near with Faith, and take this holy
 “ Sacrament to your Comfort.” And
 I pray, observe that there is nothing
new required of you, but what you
 were before obliged to, by virtue of
 your Baptismal Covenant : And whe-
 ther you receive the Sacrament or no,
 you must repent, amend, trust in GOD’s
 Mercies, and live in Love and Charity
 with all Men ; you must do them *al-*
ways, and you are called upon espe-
 cially to do them *now*.

Par. You will now give me Leave
 to ask You a few Questions in the
 General, and I shall make an End of
 this Trouble. How much Time must
 I take, to come to the Sacrament pre-
 pared, as you have been describing ?

Min.

Min. No certain Time can be assigned for that; and I would not have you scrupulous about it: Since this is the first Time, you shall do well to examine your Conscience thoroughly, and look carefully back into your Life past, and see wherein you have been faulty, or neglectful; consider especially the Sins of your Inclination, and those to which your particular Calling, and Way of Living, expose you most; consider well the Temptations that draw you to them; that you may resolve with good Assurance against them for the Time to come, as well as truly repent of what is past. Do this very well at first, and then, a sober, virtuous, and religious Life, will keep you constantly prepared, and fit to come to the Lord's Table. You may take as much Time as you please to prepare yourself beforehand, by Reading, Prayer, and Meditation; but I dare not say, that this or that

Portion

74 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

Portion of Time is so necessary to it, as that you shall offend, if you spend it not in those good Exercises. The Church has made no such Rules, but supposes, that if you live like a good Christian, a little Time will fit you for the Sacrament. And truly, as you are a Man of Business, do you but say your Prayers constantly, live virtuously, and exercise your Calling honestly and conscientiously, and I do not see but you may be in your Shop on *Saturday*, and be a good Communicant on *Sunday Morning*. To be heartily humbled before GOD for our Sins past, is an Act of the *Mind*: To resolve stedfastly to live better for the Time to come, is an Act of the *Mind*: To believe that CHRIST died for our Sins, and to be thankful to GOD for that infinite Mercy, are Acts of the *Mind*. And so it is, to forgive all that have injured us. All these preparatory Things are Acts of the *Mind*, and quickly performed. And there-
fore

fore take but Care to live well, and you shall always be duly prepared to come to the Communion. And when you consider how frequently the primitive Christians went to the Sacrament, and yet were Lawyers, Tradesmen, Merchants, and followed other Employments, you will conclude, that an innocent and virtuous Life must fit one for the Sacrament, without a *Week's*, a longer, or a shorter Sequestration from Company or Business. I do not say this, to blame any one who takes these Courses before the Sacrament; for, sometimes it is necessary, and sometimes good and fitting; but that you should not think yourself always obliged to take the same Course; or abstain from the Sacrament, because you have not had *that Time* to spend in holy Exercises. 'Tis a Misfortune that one can give no Rules that will fit *all* Christians; and that the best Rules will hurt some or other, if closely followed. Discretion is the best Director in the World.

Par.

Par. Would you have me come to the Sacrament *Fasting*, or may I do otherwise?

Min. If you consider the Institution, nothing of that kind is necessary; for it was instituted *after Supper*. Nor has the Church of *England* made any Rule about it. Where therefore neither the Laws of GOD, nor those of our Superiors have obliged us, we must use our Prudence, and do what we find best. If you find that Fasting makes you more devout and serious, and gives you a better Frame of Mind, you will certainly choose to go to the Sacrament Fasting. Or if it be indifferent, and you are much the same whether you fast, or not, and find it makes no Change at all in you, then you will choose to fast in Decency, and with Regard to ancient Practice. But if you have, by Custom, contracted such a

Habit

Habit of Eating or Drinking some light Matter every Morning, that you should be uneasy, or disordered without it, then you will choose to do as you used to do; because the Purposes of Fasting (which are to raise the Mind to God, and put it into a better Frame) are better answered by moderate Refreshment, than by wholly abstaining: I do not suppose that any one makes a full Meal in a Morning, that is not going to strong Labour, much less upon *Sunday*. And I take the Meaning of your Question to be, Whether you may eat or drink *never so little*, on the Morning you come to the Sacrament? And to that I say, that neither God, nor the Church, has appointed the contrary: but yet I would *advise* it, where the Inconveniency of doing it is none; but not advise it, if there be *any* Inconveniency in Abstaining. Only remember, that whether you abstain, or not, you do

78 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

do it without Scruple yourself, and without Censuring what another Person does, though contrary to what you do. Do in this, and in all other indifferent Cases, what you believe will tend most to your Spiritual Edification yourself, without regard to what other People do.

Par. Will you give me any particular Directions how to behave myself during the Solemnity?

Min. When the *Offertory* begins, open your *Common Prayer Book*, and with your Eye (not Voice) read along with the Minister, and make what short Application you can to yourself, of what is read; there you will find you are reminded of being *Charitable*, in general, to all that stand in Need; and, in particular, of being *just* to those who are your spiritual Guides; and giving them at least what the Laws and Customs of the

the Place have allotted them. And if you find you have been wanting either in this Charity or Justice, you will resolve to make up those Defects for the Time to come ; for, assure yourself, you will be highly unjust, if you detain from them, what is their due, both in Law and Conscience, as much as any Debt is due to yourself. When these Sentences are over, then follows the *Prayer for the whole State of Christ's Church*, with which you must be sure to join in Heart and Spirit ; and never pretend to use any other Prayers or Meditations, of *your own*, or out of any other Book; whilst the Minister is praying the *Prayers of the Church* ; for these are the best and properest for the present Purpose, and you must join with the Congregation in their Attention, and say the *Amen* with them, that you may reap the Advantage of that common Fervency, with which those Prayers fly
up

80 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

up to GOD; when this Prayer is done, then follows the *Exhortation*, (which I have still called the *Third Exhortation*) to which you must most seriously attend, for it is full of excellent Information and Instruction; it shews you the great Benefits of coming *worthily* (i. e. *with a true penitent Heart, and lively Faith*) unto this Holy Sacrament: And the great Danger of coming *unworthily*, i. e. without repenting of your Sins, and without trusting in GOD's Mercies, through CHRIST. And pray remember, that there is no other Sense of the Words, *worthily* and *unworthily*, than coming *with*, or *without* Faith in CHRIST, and sincere Repentance of Sin; and that whoever comes *worthily*, that is, repenting truly of his Sins, and believing that GOD, for CHRIST's sake, will certainly forgive all such as repent and leave their Sins—whoever comes thus, comes *worthily*; and whoever comes *worthily*, receives the *Benefits of Christ's*

Christ's Body and Blood, and dwells in Christ, and Christ in him, and is one with Christ, and Christ with him, whatever those Phrases signify, and whether you understand them thoroughly or no. And to your Comfort, moreover, whoever comes *worthily*, escapes all those Dangers and Mischiefs, whatsoever they be, that are expressed by “—being guilty of the
“ Body and Blood of CHRIST our Sa-
“ viour—eating and drinking our own
“ Damnation — not considering the
“ LORD's Body——kindling GOD's
“ Wrath against us — and provoking
“ Him to plague us with divers Dif-
“ eases, and sundry kinds of Death.”
These are hard Things all of them, and some of them hard to be understood; but, whatever they signify, however grievous and hazardous they are to the Souls and Bodies of Men, —they are all avoided and escaped, by coming *worthily*, i. e. by Faith in CHRIST's *Merits*, and repenting of our *Sins*. And therefore, if there were a thou-
sand

82 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

stand more such terrible Expressions, (as I could wish there were fewer than there are) let them not frighten you, or give you any Trouble. *Repent*, and *believe*, and all is well. When this and the next Exhortation are ended, you come to the *Confession of Sins*, in which you must join with the Minister both in Heart and Voice, for you are much concerned in it; but when the *Absolution* (which is next to it) begins, then hold your Peace, and attend to the Minister with all your *Heart*: The Custom is, in some Places, for the People to say a soft *Amen*, at the End of every Sentence, and there is nothing indecent in that Practice. But for any one to repeat the *Absolution*, Word for Word, with the Minister, is so absurd, and shews such Ignorance, that one would wonder any one should fall into that Practice: *Absolution* is the Work of God's Minister, and belongs to him alone, in God's Name. The Peoples

Part

Part is to be silent, and *attend*, and to say nothing but a most earnest *Amen* to that excellent Prayer. And, pray, believe me, once for all, that nothing fixes the Attention like Silence; and let me warn you to observe in all your Publick Prayers, that you join with the Minister where you are bid, and at all other Times be *silent*; attend and make it your own, by saying a hearty *Amen*. The observing Order and Decency in Prayers, tends much to Edification; whereas the contrary begets Distraction; and disturbs both yourself, and your Neighbours; it offends devout and understanding People mightily, to hear Men and Women say their Prayers absurdly and indecently, holding their Tongues where they should speak and join, and joining with the Minister aloud, where they should only hearken, and say *Amen*; but what can be more improper, than to hear them promiscuously absolve themselves and one another,
and

84 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

and taking the Priestly Office on them, in a Part of it, which is one of the most distinguishing he has? When the *Absolution* is over, attend most diligently to the *Sentences of Scripture* which the Minister is to read; and when he bids you *lift up your Heart to God*, you must be sure not only to do it in Word, but in Deed, and great earnest. When the Prayer of Consecration is over (and not before) you will have some Time before the Bread and Wine are brought to you, which you must employ as well as you can, either in Prayer, or reading something proper to meditate on, on that Occasion; and to this purpose you may furnish yourself out of some good Book of Devotion. But be not much discouraged if you cannot fill up all that Space with regular Devotion, or with intense Meditation; do as well as you can: Remember your own Offences with as
much

The Reasonable Communicant. 85

much Sorrow as you can; and the Mercies of GOD to you in JESUS CHRIST, with as much Love, and Joy, and Gratitude; resolve in earnest to amend in what Particulars you find yourself most faulty; and ask of GOD the Grace and Power to put these good Resolves in Execution; and that the Merits of this saving Sacrifice which you are now commemorating, may be extended and applied to you, in the Forgiveness of your Sins, and all other Benefits of CHRIST's Passion. Recommend to GOD's Mercy your Parents and Relations, Friends, and all the World: Do any Thing that is good and proper to fill up the Time, and employ your Thoughts, till the Minister come to you, to give you the consecrated Bread and Wine.

Par. And then, I suppose, you would have me raise my Devotion to the highest pitch I can?

E

Min.

Min. Yes, I would have you very intent upon what you are about: But take good heed, lest, while you are striving to raise your Heart, you be not lost and bewildred. Strive rather for a serious and composed Mind; let your Devotion be rather *regular* and *equal*, than *exalted* and *transported*: Attend gravely to what the Minister says; and when he has repeated that excellent Prayer “ —The Body of our “ LORD JESUS CHRIST, which was “ given for thee, preserve thy Body “ and Soul to everlasting Life—” be sure you say softly a most hearty *Amen*: for, is not that the Thing you come for and desire? When he has said, “ —Take, and eat this in Remembrance that CHRIST died for “ thee, and feed on him in thy Heart “ by Faith with Thanksgiving—” take it, and whilst you are eating it, make some such Prayer as this—*Grant, O LORD,*

The Reasonable Communicant. 87

LORD, that the Sense of this thy infinite Mercy, shewed to Man in so much Misery, may never depart from my Mind! Let me, from henceforth, die to all my Sins, and my corrupt Affections, and live alone to Righteousness and Virtue! I stedfastly believe thou diest upon the Cross, to save me from the Guilt and Punishment of Sin, O give me but the Grace to walk with a thankful, honest Heart before thee! Accept of my imperfect Sorrow and Repentance, imperfect Faith, imperfect Resolutions, and let the precious Merits of my LORD supply the rest, and make up what thou seest is wanting! When the Minister delivers the Cup, and says, " — The Blood of our " LORD JESUS CHRIST, which was " shed for thee, preserve thy Body and " Soul to everlasting Life—" be sure you say *Amen*: for there it is most proper, and there it was formerly placed. When he has said " — Drink this in " Remembrance that CHRIST's Blood

88 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

“ was shed for thee, and be thankful —”
 take it, and drink very *moderately*, re-
 garding neither Thirst nor Pleasure in
 that Draught. And after you have done,
 you may make some such short Prayer, as
 you did after the Bread—*O let my Soul
 be washed and cleansed in the Blood of
 JESUS, that was shed for me ! and let
 me never be unmindful of this Mercy,
 but give thee Thanks, not only with my
 Lips, but Life, by giving up myself to
 thy Service, and walking before thee in
 Holiness and Righteousness all my Days,
 through JESUS CHRIST my LORD;
 to whom with thee, O Father, and the
 Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory,
 now and for ever !* But let me remind
 you, that you do not pretend to repeat,
 either aloud or softly, the Words which
 the Minister uses, in delivering the Bread
 and Wine ; your Business is to attend
 soberly to what he says, and to say
Amen. I tell you this, because an idle
 Custom has prevailed, of Peoples re-
 peating

peating what the Priest says; to the Disturbance of the Priest, and to the Hindrance, I dare say, of their own Devotion, which would be furthered by a grave and silent Attention; which I take all Occasions to recommend to you. And that your Mind may be employed, whilst the rest are communicating, you will choose to say some good Prayers, or read some short Discourse, seasonable and proper; and if that do not hold out to the End, you may listen to the Minister delivering the Bread and Wine to the Communicants, and say a hearty *Amen* to each of them, for that is praying for the greatest Blessing God can bestow upon them — “the Preservation of their Body and “Soul to everlasting Life.” And when all have received, and the Minister returns to his Prayers, be sure you be not unready to join with him; nay, though you should not have ended your private Devotions, yet break them off,

though in the middle, and join with the publick ones, for that is better, and your Duty; and so go on with him, in Heart, till he have made an End. After which, you will, in a short Ejaculation, ask of G^{OD} the Forgiveness of all your Coldness, Wandring, and Indifference, or worser Thoughts during the whole Performance; beseeching Him to preserve in you, a lively Sense of his infinite Mercies shewn to Man in CHRIST JESUS, and that you may go home more and more confirmed in Virtue and holy Resolutions, and abide in his Favour to your Life's End.

Par. I thank you, SIR, for your Care in thus preparing and conducting me, from the Beginning of this solemn Performance to the End of it; and in particular, for those Hints of Things, that to wiser People may appear little, and needless, but to me, useful, orderly, and tending to Edification, if I
rightly

rightly observe them. When all is over, I suppose, I shall return Home mighty well satisfied, full of *Uñction*, Joy, and holy *Consolation*, assured of *GOD's* Favour, the Forgiveness of my Sins, and everlasting Happiness.

Min. It may be not : One may be in *GOD's* Favour, without being assured of it ; one may have his Sins forgiven, without knowing or believing it ; and one may be (in the Purpose of *GOD*) everlastingly happy in the World to come, and yet be miserable and desponding here. These Things, I think we have already spoken to, and agreed in them. In this you may be fully satisfied, that if you truly repent you of your Sins, they shall certainly be forgiven ; and you shall certainly be happy, but that is in the World to come ; and whether you shall have the Comfort of believing your Sins forgiven, at such a certain Time, *at*, or *after* the

92 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

receiving the Sacrament, is not quite so sure. No such Joy, or Consolation is annexed, by any Promise of G O D, to the worthy Reception of the blessed Sacrament; the Benefits are indeed secured by G O D's Promise to the worthy Receiver, from whence that Joy may reasonably result; but the Party may, by some Indisposition of Mind, not be filled with it: And let me now advise you, not to expect, or depend upon any such unusual Lightsomness or Consolations; but if they follow, it is well; if not, there is no Harm or Danger in the Want of them. Prepare yourself by true and sincere Repentance, and come with Faith, and as well disposed as you can, and leave the rest to G O D; you will have the Satisfaction of having done your Duty in the best manner you could, and with that you must be content, for the rest is not in your Power. I have known many good People disconsolate upon this Occasion,

casio
Exp
gina
out
Go
and
and
been
beca
Con
prep
have
their
chan
ble
Wo
rage
and
the
and
in t
Chr
ther
Con

caſion, by being diſappointed of ſuch Expectations as their own warm Imagination had only raiſed in them, without any Reason, or Promiſe made on GOD's Part. They came away cold, and little affected, from the Sacrament, and thought their Hearts muſt have been filled with devout Tranſports; and becauſe of this, they fell into deep Concern, and believed they had not prepared themſelves as they ought to have done; although, upon examining their Hearts, they could not juſtly charge themſelves with any conſiderable Omiſſions, or Negligence in that Work. And therefore be not diſcouraged, if you find not that Content and Pleaſure after your coming from the Sacrament, which you may hope and wiſh for before. Go on ſteadily in the Ways of Virtue, and do your Chriſtian Duties conſtantly; and whether you feel the ſenſible Warmths and Comforts of Religion or no, yet you

94 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

shall never want, at length, the just Rewards of it; *those* depend upon Uncertainties, *these* upon G O D's Goodness, and Truth, which cannot fail.

Par. How oft, S I R, do you think it necessary for me to come to the Sacrament?

Min. No Body can answer that Question better than yourself: You must consider where you live, and what Opportunities you have of doing it, and what Reasons you shall have not to communicate, where you have Opportunity. But be not, however, very scrupulous in the Matter; do not think you offend G O D, if you do not lay hold of every Opportunity offered you, by the Place you live in; nor think it sufficient that you communicate thrice a Year, (as the Law requires) when you may do it every *first Sunday* in the Month, according to the Custom

Custom of the City where you live. Fail not to observe the Law of the Land; and be sure to have Regard to the Custom of the Place; and think upon the Advantages of serving God, and coming to this holy Ordinance, and then your Piety and Discretion will direct you, how oft you are to communicate; let not *little* Occasions hinder you, nor *great* ones please you; do not look upon it as a frightful or dangerous Duty, but easy, safe, and beneficial. And I give you these Cautions now, that you may begin with right Apprehensions of the Matter; for the first Impressions generally last, and People go on and end, much as they enter on this Duty.

Par. I thank you, SIR, for this Warning, and good Advice, which I will make the best Use I can of: But I wonder much to hear you tell me,
that

that this is not a frightful and hazardous Duty, when the Communion Service is so full of dreadful and amazing Threatnings, that I have known both understanding and religious People much discouraged and perplexed by them. We are told in the *second* Exhortation, that “ the Danger is “ great, if we receive unworthily, even “ eating and drinking our own Dam- “ nation.” And in the *first* — that “ to come unworthily, is but thereby “ to increase our Damnation ; ” — and, that “ the Devil will enter into us, “ and fill us full of Iniquities, and “ bring us to Destruction both of Bo- “ dy and Soul.” There is hardly any thing able to support a Man’s Spirit under such Apprehensions. I suppose these Things are all of them exactly true, and not Exaggerations: And if they be, I leave you to consider, whether a Man may not as well venture

not

not to come to the Sacrament, as venture the Hazards of *coming unworthily*, and thereby increase his Damnation.

Min. Remember (what I have observed before) that to come *unworthily*, is to come without any Repentance or Sorrow for past Offences, and without any Resolutions of Amendment for the future. And such a coming as this, must necessarily increase a Man's Damnation, because he does apparently despise his Saviour, and insult his holy Ordinance; the whole Design of which, and almost every Word of which, supposes Sorrow for his Sins past, and Purposes of Amendment for the Time to come. 'Tis almost like a *Jew's* coming to be baptized, who hates Christianity in his Heart, and intends to affront that Sacrament, but comes to serve some secular Interest and End: Or if he comes not with Contempt
and

98 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

and Malice, yet he makes a most solemn Profession of a great many Promises, none of which he has any Design of keeping. Now such a one must certainly be in a worse Condition, than if he had never been baptized, and his Baptism must certainly increase his Damnation. And must it not be the same, with those who come to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and there pretend most solemnly to repent and be sorry for their Sins past, and to vow all holy Obedience for the future, and yet do neither, but purpose to continue in their grievous Sins? Or if they do not positively purpose to continue in their Sins, yet have they no Intention to leave them. Such coming must unavoidably increase Damnation, because here is a new and most provoking Sin, of mocking CHRIST'S Ordinance, added to his old Impenitence. But truly, I believe, as well as hope, that
not

not one Sinner in a hundred thousand comes to the Sacrament without a general Repentance, and some sort of Resolution of forsaking his Sins, though it be faint, and loose, and ineffectual. And of such, I know not how to conclude that they thereby increase their Damnation, any otherwise than they, who, without coming to the Sacrament, make such kind of Resolutions frequently, and yet forget and break them, may be said also to increase their Damnation; since every new Sin does certainly add to our Misery, and more and more endanger our Souls. I will therefore yield to you, that *to come unworthily*, is a greater Venture, than *to stay away*; if by *unworthily*, you mean a positive Intention not to leave your Sins, but still to continue in them. But if by *unworthily* you mean such a Repentance, and Resolution of leaving Sin, as though when it is made, is hearty
and

and sincere, yet afterwards proves ineffectual; then I will not yield, that to come *unworthily*, is more dangerous than to stay away; because the breaking a good Resolution (not intended to be broken when it is made) is not a greater Offence, than not to make that Resolution, although you were obliged to make it. *Caius*, a great Squanderer, owed me a hundred Crowns, and upon my Demand, promised to pay that Sum at six Months end, according to his Obligation; the Day came, but not my Debtor; for though when he made that Promise, he was in great Earnest, and seriously intended to take up, and discharge himself, yet he fell into his old loose Courses, and was thereby disabled from approving himself an honest Man. *Titius*, another Squanderer as great as he, owed me the like Sum, under the like Obligation, but when I called upon him, made me no Answer,

affirm-

affirming afterwards that he would not promise, because he intended not to leave his ill Courses, which would certainly disable him from paying his Debt. Am I more obliged to *Titius*, for not promising, because he intended not to perform, than to *Caius* for promising, and intending to perform? Do I owe him more Favour, who refuses to promise what he is in Reason obliged to promise, and in Justice to perform; than I owe to him, who promises in good Earnest, and intends at that Time to perform, though afterwards he forgets and fails? Put these two Men under equal Obligations, and equal Abilities of discharging them, and you will see, to which of them most Kindness is owing from the Creditor. To promise, with a Purpose of not paying, is to deceive me, and abuse me; and to promise with a Purpose of paying, though he do not pay, is only to disappoint

point me. I say, therefore, (to make a short Application) that to come to the Sacrament, with a general Sorrow and Concern for his Sins past, and a general Resolution to live better for the Time to come, although Men afterwards fall into Sin again, and forget their good Resolutions, is not a worser and more hazardous Thing, than to stay away from the Sacrament, without any Repentance at all of past Sins, or any Resolutions of living better, but going on still in their old Course of Wickedness. If it were, indeed, a voluntary Thing, and left at Peoples Liberty, whether they would come to the Sacrament, or stay away, then it were safer not to come : But since it is a Duty laid upon Men by CHRIST'S Command, and all Men are obliged to come, by virtue of the Obedience they owe to their Saviour, I can see no Safety in refusing to come ; and this refusing

ing

ing to qualify themselves and come, must as certainly increase their Damnation, as coming less qualified than they ought to be. I would not encourage any one to come *unworthily*, *i. e.* without Repentance, without Resolutions of Amendment, without Faith, and without Charity, for certainly such coming must be hazardous. But I can see as much Hazard in disobeying CHRIST, in refusing to come as he commands, because Men live (and still resolve to live) without Repentance, without Resolutions of Amendment, without Faith, and without Charity. In a Word, there is no Safety but in Repentance and Obedience, both of which, by the **Grace** of GOD, are in every Christian's **Power**. And to that Grace I leave you, beseeching Him who is the **Author of that**, and every other good and perfect Gift, to bestow them, in such measure, on us all, that
we

104 *The Reasonable Communicant.*

we may most religiously discharge both this, and every other Christian Duty, in the manner that we ought, to the Glory of his great Name, and the Salvation of all our Souls in the Day of our LORD JESUS.

F I N I S.



105

A SHORT
OFFICE

FOR THE
HOLY COMMUNION;

Consisting of
PRAYERS, MEDITATIONS,
AND
THANKSGIVINGS,
Before, At, and After the
BLESSED SACRAMENT.

L O N D O N :

Printed for B. DOD, Bookseller to THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRIS-
TIAN KNOWLEDGE, at the *Bible and*
Key in *Ave-Mary Lane*, near *Stationers Hall*.

M DCC XLVIII.

A SHORT OFFICE

FOR THE

HOLY COMMUNION;

Consisting of

PRAYERS, MEDITATIONS,

AND

THANKSGIVINGS,

Before, At, and After the

BLESSED SACRAMENT.

AND

Printed by J. D. ...
...
...
...

...



107

A SHORT
OFFICE
FOR THE
HOLY COMMUNION.

COL. iii. 17.

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD JESUS, giving thanks to GOD and the Father by him.

A Prayer to GOD, that he would be pleased to accept our Preparation to receive the blessed Sacrament.

I Prostrate myself before thee, my most gracious GOD and merciful Father, in an humble Acknowledgment of my Unworthiness, and Insufficiency

ficiency of myself, for any thing that is Good. I am sensible that without thee I can do nothing; and therefore do humbly implore thy gracious Assistance, and Acceptance of my Endeavour to prepare myself for the worthy Receiving of the blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of thy dear Son.

Stir up, I beseech thee, such pious Affections and Dispositions in my Soul, and fill my Mind with such holy Meditations, as are suitable to this Occasion. Grant me such a Sense of my Sins, and of the Sufferings of my blessed Saviour for them, as may affect my Heart with a deep Sorrow for my Sins, and an eternal Hatred and Displeasure against them, and may effectually engage me to love, and live to Him, that died for me, JESUS CHRIST, my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A penitent Confession of Sins, with a humble Supplication for Mercy and Forgiveness.

MOST gracious and merciful God who art of purer Eyes than to behold

Behold Iniquity; I desire to humble my Soul before thee, in a deep Sense of my own Vileness and Unworthiness, by means of the many Sins and Provocations, which I have been guilty of against thy divine Majesty, by Thought, Word and Deed. Forgive, O LORD, all the Sins and Follies of my Life, which have been many and great; and which I do now with Shame and Sorrow confess and bewail before thee, for thy Mercy's Sake in JESUS CHRIST. Pardon, O my GOD, my manifold Neglects and Omissions, and slight and careless Performance of the Duties of Religion, without due Affection and Attention of Mind; that I have not served thee with that Purity of Intention, with that Sincerity of Heart, with that Fervency of Spirit, with that Zeal for thy Glory, with that Care, and Diligence, and Constancy, that I ought.

Forgive, O LORD, my Sins of Ignorance and Infirmary, which are more than can be numbered; but especially all my wilful Transgressions of thy holy and righteous Laws; the Impurity of my Heart and Thoughts, all irregular
F Appetites

Appetites and Passions, and every
 ful and wicked Practice, of what Na-
 ture or Kind soever: More particularly,
 I do, with great Shame and Confusion
 of Face, confess and lament before thee,
 from whom nothing is hid, that I have
 grievously offended, * * * * * [*Here
 Particulars may be mentioned*] These
 my Transgressions, with many more
 which I cannot remember or reckon up
 before thee, are all in thy Sight, O
 LORD; and my most secret Sins in the
 Light of thy Countenance. When I
 look back on the Errors and Miscarria-
 ges of my past Life, and consider with
 myself what I have done, and what I
 deserve at thy Hands, my Flesh trem-
 bleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid
 of thy Judgments. I am ashamed, O
 my GOD, and blush to lift up mine
 Eyes to thee my GOD. LORD, I am
 vile; what shall I answer thee? I
 abhor myself, and repent in Dust and
 Ashes.

Make me deeply sensible of the great
 Evil of my Sins, and work in me a
 hearty Contrition for them; and let the
 Sense of them be more grievous to me
 than

than
 Hav
 acco
 all
 my
 men.

A P
 of
 to

A
 Good
 and
 humb
 ance
 to be
 form
 Temp
 or in
 Grant
 ing to
 and th
 the c
 the
 holy

for the Days of Preparation. III

than of any other Evil whatsoever. Have Mercy upon me, O LORD, and according to thy tender Mercies forgive all my Transgressions, for the Sake of my blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

A Prayer for the Grace and Assistance of GOD's Holy Spirit, to enable us to resolve and do better for the future.

AND now, O LORD, in Confidence of thy great Mercy and Goodness to all that are truly penitent, and sincerely resolve to do better, I most humbly implore the Grace and Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to enable me to become every Day better, and to reform whatever has been amiss in the Temper and Disposition of my Mind, or in any of the Actions of my Life. Grant me the Wisdom and Understanding to know my Duty, and the Heart and the Will to do it. Vouchsafe to me the continual Presence and Direction, the Assistance and Comforts, of thy Holy Spirit, whereby I may be disposed

and enabled to do thy Will with Delight and Chearfulness, and with Patience and Contentedness to submit to it in all Things. Endue me, O LORD, with the true Fear and Love of thee, and with a prudent Zeal for thy Glory: Encrease in me more and more the Graces of Charity and Meekness, of Truth, and Justice, and Fidelity: Give me Humility and Patience, and a Firmness of Spirit to bear every Condition with Constancy and Equality of Mind.

Enable me, O LORD, by thy Grace to govern all my Appetites, and every inordinate Lust and Passion, by Temperance and Purity, and Meekness of Wisdom; setting thee always before me, that I may not sin against thee. Create in me a clean Heart, O GOD, and renew a right Spirit within me. Purify my Soul from all evil Thoughts and Inclinations, from all bad Intentions and Designs. Deliver me, O LORD, from Pride and Vanity, from immoderate Self-love, and obstinate Self-will; and from all Malice and Envy, and Ill-will towards any.

Make

for the Days of Preparation. 113

Make me to love thee, as I ought, above all Things; and let the Interest of thy Honour and Glory be ever dearer to me than my own Will or Reputation, or any temporal Advantage whatsoever.

Subdue in me the evil Spirit of Wrath and Revenge; and dispose my Heart patiently to bear Reproaches and Wrongs, and be ready not only to forgive, but to return Good for Evil.

Confirm me, O my God, in all these holy Resolutions; and do thou keep it for ever in the Purpose of my Heart, to perform them to the utmost of my Power. All which I humbly beg for thy Mercy's Sake in JESUS CHRIST.
Amen.

An humble Intercession with God for all Mankind; for the whole Christian Church; for our Relations and Friends; for those in Distress; and for our Enemies.

I Thine unworthy Servant desire likewise humbly to interceed with thee, the God and Father of all, for all Mankind; that thou wouldest be pleas-

ed to have Compassion on their Blindness and Ignorance, their gross Errors and their wicked Practices. Send forth, I beseech thee, thy Light and thy Truth, to scatter that thick Darkness which covers the Nations, and overspreads so great a Part of the World; that thy Way may be known upon Earth, and thy saving Health among all Nations.

Bless and preserve thy Church, dispersed over the Face of the Earth: Restore to it Unity and Concord, in the Acknowledgment of the Truth, and the Practice of Righteousness and Goodness. Remove out of it all Errors and Corruptions, all Tyranny and Usurpation over the Minds and Consciences of Men; that they who profess the same Faith may no longer persecute and destroy one another; but may be kind and tender-hearted one towards another, as it becomes Brethren, and those that are Heirs of the same common Salvation. But more especially I beseech thee to be merciful to that Part of it which thou hast planted in these Kingdoms; and grant that Piety and Virtue, Peace and Charity, may be the distinguishing Marks of it. Endue the Pastors and
Gover-

Governors of it with the Spirit of true Religion and Goodness, and make them zealous and diligent to promote it in those who are under their Instruction and Care. Give them Wisdom to discern the best and most proper Means of effecting this good End, and thy Blessing on their Endeavours.

And I beseech thee, O LORD, of thy great Goodness, to bless all my Relations and Friends * * * * *; but more particularly I beg a Blessing on those, who had the Care of my Education, by instructing me in the Principles and Duties of the Christian Religion, and thereby guiding me into the Paths of Virtue and true Holiness.

Be merciful, O GOD, to all that are in Affliction and Distress; that labour under Poverty, or Persecution, or Captivity; under bodily Pains and Diseases, or under Temptation, or Trouble of Mind: Be pleased to support and comfort them, and in thy due Time to deliver them, according to thy great Mercy.

Forgive, I beseech thee, most merciful Father, to all mine Enemies, all their Malice and Ill-will towards me; and

give them Repentance and better Minds; which I heartily beg of thee for them, as I myself hope for Mercy and Forgiveness at thy Hands, through the Merits and Mediation of JESUS CHRIST, my most merciful God and Saviour. *Amen.*

A thankful Acknowledgment of the Mercies of GOD, both temporal and spiritual, and above all, for the Redemption of Mankind.

Blessed and glorious LORD GOD, the great Creator, and Preserver, and Governor of all Things; my Saviour, and Deliverer, and continual Benefactor; I acknowledge, I admire, I adore thy infinite Excellencies and Perfections: and let all the Creatures in Heaven and Earth say Amen.

I render Thanks to thee, most gracious GOD, for innumerable Favours conferred upon me thy poor Creature, and most unworthy; for my Being, for my Reason, and for all other Endowments and Faculties of Soul and Body; for thy continual Care and watchful Provi-

Providence over me from the Beginning of my Life, and through the whole Course of it. I will still hope in thy Goodness, O LORD, who hast been my Trust from my Youth: By thee have I been holden up from the Womb; my Praise shall be continually of thee.

Above all, I adore thy tender Mercy and Compassion to me and all Mankind, in sending thy only Son into the World to redeem us from Sin and Misery, and by suffering in our Nature and dying in our stead, to purchase for us eternal Life.

I bless thee for the Light of the glorious Gospel; for the Knowledge and Sense of my Duty towards thee; for delivering me from Temptations too hard for me, and supporting me under many; for the Direction, and Assistance, and Comforts of thy Holy Spirit; for restraining me by thy Grace, and reclaiming me from the Ways of Sin and Vanity; and for all the gracious Communications of thy Goodness, whereby thou hast inclined my Heart to love and fear thee, and enabled me in any measure to do my Duty.

For these, and all other thy Blessings and Favours to me, which are more than can be numbered, I render unto thee, most gracious GOD, all possible Praise and Thanks by JESUS CHRIST, my blessed LORD and Saviour. *Amen.*

A Prayer to GOD, to prepare our Hearts for the worthy Receiving of the Holy Sacrament, and to make us Partakers of the Blessings and Benefits of it.

N. B. This Prayer may be used the Morning you intend to Communicate, and after the Sermon is ended.

I Come to thee, O my LORD GOD, from whom are the Preparations of the Heart, and the good Dispositions of our Minds for thy Worship and Service. Fit me, O LORD, by a hearty Contrition for my Sins, and a sincere Resolution of a better Course, to approach thy Altar. Accept of the Expiation which thy Son has made of all my Transgressions by the Sacrifice of himself, as of a Lamb without Spot or Blemish. Let the Remembrance of my Sins, and of his

his bitter Sufferings for them, pierce my very Heart, and engage me for ever to love and serve him, who laid down his Life for me. Cleanse me, O LORD, from all Filthiness of Flesh and Spirit, that I may be a meet Guest for thy holy Table, and a real Partaker of those Blessings and Benefits which are commemorated in the Sacrament of CHRIST'S Body and Blood.

Strengthen, O GOD, all good Resolutions in me; enable me by thy Grace faithfully to perform the Conditions of that Covenant, which I made in Baptism, and am now about to renew in the holy Sacrament; by dedicating myself entirely, and for ever, to the Service of my blessed Redeemer, who hath loved me, and washed me from my Sins in his own Blood. To Him be all Honour and Glory, Thanksgiving and Praise, Love and Obedience, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

If you have more Time before the Minister begins the Communion Service, observe the Directions at Page 122; but when that is begun, then immediately lay aside all other Devotions, and accompany him with great but silent Attention. *Short*

Short MEDITATIONS and EJACULATIONS at the Holy COMMUNION.

When we offer our Alms.

Blessed JESU! who didst accept the poor Widow's two Mites, be pleased graciously to accept this from thy unworthy Servant.

O LORD, comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory Life are in Trouble, Sorrow, Need, Sicknes, or any other Adversity.

It is, O LORD, the Effect of thy Goodness, that I am enabled to relieve others; and the Effect of thy greater Mercy, that I am ready and willing to perform it. Let this Testimony of my Love and Gratitude be acceptable in thy Sight; and make me truly thankful for all those happy Opportunities thou givest me of doing Good. *Amen.*

When those Portions of Scripture are read which follow the Absolution, and are designed to beget in us a lively Faith in GOD's Mercy,

we

we should make short Ejaculations after them, in the following Manner.

“Come unto me, &c.”

Refresh, O LORD, thy Servant, wearied with the Burden of Sin.

“So GOD loved the World, &c.”

LORD, I believe in thy Son JESUS CHRIST, and let this Faith purify me from all Iniquity.

“This is a true Saying, &c.”

I embrace with all Thankfulness that Salvation, which JESUS CHRIST has brought into the World.

“If any Man sin, &c.”

Interceed for me, O blessed JESU! that my Sins may be pardoned through the Merits of thy Death.

A Prayer immediately after the Elements are Consecrated.

I Adore thee, O blessed JESUS, who didst humble thyself to the Death of the
the

the Cross, that I might be redeemed from a State of Sin and Misery : I remember with all Thankfulness this thy wonderful Condescension for my Salvation. Blessed be thy holy Name for this Christian Sacrifice thou hast provided for us, to convey to us the Benefits of that all-sufficient Oblation once offered for the Sins of the World. Grant, O LORD, that the Power of it may strengthen my Weakness, and fortify me against all Temptations ; that the Wisdom of it may enlighten my Mind, and cure my Ignorance ; and that the Purity of it may sanctify me throughout in Body, Soul, and Spirit. *Amen, LORD JESU. Amen.*

N.B. If the Congregation is large, till such Time as you think proper to go unto the Communion Table, your Time may be profitably employed in repeating some of the foregoing Prayers, or fervently reading some of the Penitential Psalms, which are these ; 6. 32. 38. 51. 102. 130. and 143.

At

At prostrating before the Altar.

Lift up my Soul to thee, my God,
humbly imploring thy Blessing upon
me, and gracious Assistance of me in
the holy Action I am now about. —
Forgive my Want of due Preparation,
and accept of my sincere Desire to per-
form an acceptable Service to thee, thro'
JESUS CHRIST.

Before receiving the Bread.

LORD, I am not worthy of the
Crumbs which fall from thy Ta-
ble; but thou art the same LORD, whose
Property is always to have Mercy.

*When the Minister delivers the Bread, attend
very gravely to what he says, and when he
has repeated that excellent Prayer — The
Body of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, which
was given for thee, preserve thy Body
and Soul unto everlasting Life — be sure
you say softly a most hearty Amen.*

After

After receiving the Bread.

Greater Love than this hath no Man, that a Man lay down his Life for his Friend.

— Herein hath **G O D** commended his Love to us, that whilst we were Enemies he gave his Son to die for us.

Grant, **O L O R D**, that the Sense of this thy infinite Mercy, shewed to Man in so much Misery, may never depart from my Mind! — Let me from henceforth die to all my Sins, and my corrupt Affections, and live alone to Righteousness and Virtue! — I steadfastly believe thou diedst upon the Cross, to save me from the Guilt and Punishment of Sin; O give me but the Grace to walk with a thankful honest Heart before thee! — Accept of my imperfect Sorrow and Repentance, imperfect Faith, imperfect Resolutions; and let the precious Merits of my **L O R D** supply the rest, and make up what thou seest wanting! *Amen.*

Before

Before receiving the Cup.

WHat shall I render to the LORD for all his Benefits? I will take the Cup of Salvation, and I will bless the Name of the LORD.

When the Minister delivers the Cup, and says,

— The Blood of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, which was shed for thee, preserve thy Body and Soul unto everlasting Life — *there also say a most hearty Amen: And when he has said, — Drink this in Remembrance that CHRIST'S Blood was shed for thee, and be thankful — Take it, and drink very moderately, regarding neither Thirst nor Pleasure in that Draught.*

After the Cup.

BLessed be GOD for his unspeakable Gift, his dearly beloved Son JESUS CHRIST, in whom we have Redemption through his Blood, even the Forgiveness of Sins.

O let my Soul be washed and cleansed in the Blood of JESUS, that was shed for

for me! And let me never be unmindful of this Mercy; but give thee Thanks not only with my Lips but Life, by giving up myself to thy Service, and walking before thee in Holiness and Righteousness all my Days, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD; to whom, with thee O Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory now and for ever. *Amen.*

After the Conclusion of the whole Action.*

BLESS the LORD, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name. — Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits: — who forgiveth all thine Iniquities, and healeth all thy Diseases: — who redeemeth thy Life from Destruction, and crowneth thee with Loving-kindness and tender Mercies: — who satisfieth thy Mouth with good Things. — Praise the LORD, O my Soul. Praise the LORD. *Amen.*

* This may be said while you remain before the Altar, unless you hinder others that are coming to receive; and then it may be said when you retire to your Seat.

Devotions after the Communion. 127

*A Prayer when you retire to your Seat,
or return Home.*

*Which should likewise be added to your
Evening Devotions.*

I Praise and magnify thy great and glorious Name, O LORD my God, for the blessed Opportunity afforded to me this Day, of commemorating thy infinite Goodness and Mercy to me and all Mankind, in sending thy only Son into the World to take our Nature upon him; to submit to the Infirmities and Miseries of it; to live amongst us, and die for us: and to preserve the Memory of this great Love and Goodness of thine to us for ever in our Hearts, that thou hast been pleased to appoint the blessed Sacrament, for a solemn Remembrance of it. Grant, O LORD, that I may faithfully keep and perform that holy Covenant, which I have this Day so solemnly renewed and confirmed in thy Presence, and at thy Table. Let it be an eternal Obligation upon me, of perpetual Love and Obedience to thee: Let nothing seem hard for me to do,

128 *Devotions after the Communion.*

do, or grievous for me to suffer for thy sake, who whilst I was a Sinner, and an Enemy to thee, lovedst me at such a Rate as never any Man did his Friend. Grant that by this Sacrament there may be conveyed to my Soul new spiritual Life and Strength, and such a Measure of thy Grace and Assistance, as may enable me to a greater Care of my Duty for the future: that I may henceforth live as becomes the Redeemed of the LORD; even to Him who died for my Sins and rose again for my Justification, and is now sat down on the right Hand of the Throne of GOD, to make Intercession for me: In his holy Name and Words, I conclude my imperfect Prayers.

OUR Father, &c.

If more Devotions are wanted to employ you whilst others are receiving, the 119th Psalm will afford proper Matter for your Meditation.

When

When the Minister has finished the Communion Service.

Pardon, O GOD, those many Imperfections that have accompanied me in the Performance of this holy Duty; and grant that those Things, which I have faithfully asked according to thy Will, may effectually be obtained, to the Relief of my Necessities, and to the setting forth of thy Glory, thro' JESUS CHRIST, my only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

A Prayer at our Return Home, which may likewise be added to our Evening Devotions.

O LORD my GOD! I desire with all Thankfulness of Heart again to bless and praise thy holy Name, for the numberless Instances of thy Kindness and Mercy bestowed upon me, and more particularly for thy great Goodness this Day vouchsafed me, in admitting me, who am but sinful Dust and Ashes,

130 *A Prayer in our Retirement.*

Ashes, to approach thy holy Table, and for that Pity and Compassion thou hast shewn to my weak and diseased Soul, in strengthening and refreshing it by this blessed Sacrament.

O LORD, fill my Heart with a deep and lasting Sense of what thou hast done for me, that I may make it the sincere and hearty Endeavour of my whole Life to please and obey thee, and to keep at the utmost Distance from every Thing that is displeasing in thy Sight.

O my GOD, it is thou only who workest in us to will and to do those Things, that be acceptable to thy divine Majesty: Without thee I am not able to please thee; without thy preventing and assisting Grace, all my Endeavours will be vain and ineffectual: O let thy Fatherly Hand, I beseech thee, be always over me: Let thy Holy Spirit be ever present with me, and strengthen me, a poor weak Creature (subject to numberless Frailties and Infirmities) with the daily Increase of thy manifold Gifts and Graces, that I may be enabled to overcome the most powerful Tem-

A Prayer in our Retirement. 131

Temptations of the World, the Flesh,
and the Devil.

Grant, O merciful GOD, that the
healing and refreshing Virtues of that
blessed Sacrament, which I have this
Day been a Partaker of, may purify and
cleanse my corrupt Nature, and cure all
the Diseases and Disorders that Sin has
brought into my Soul.

O LORD! let no unruly Lusts and
Passions ever get the Dominion over me,
Let nothing that is offensive in thy Sight,
be ever pleasing in mine. Give me a
truly Christian Spirit; the Spirit of
Meekness and Humility; of Patience
and Charity; and endue me with that
heavenly Temper of Mind which thou
lovest and delightest in, and which is
more to be desired than all this World
can possibly give me.

Bless, O LORD, I beseech thee, all
thy sacred Institutions for my Increase
in Righteousness and true Holiness, and
grant that I may daily grow in Grace,
and be continually improving under all
the Methods of thy Love; that so a
good Conscience being my greatest Care,
and Religion my chief Delight, I may
live

132 *A Prayer in our Retirement.*

live in thy Favour and die in thy Peace;
and at last, through thy Mercy, be
found meet to be a Partaker of the In-
heritance of the Saints in Light.

With my own, I desire the Happi-
ness of all Mankind. O thou Father of
Mercies, be gracious to all Sorts and
Conditions of Men, to my Relations
and Friends, and to my very Enemies;
to those that are still in Darkness, and
to those that enjoy the Light of thy ho-
ly Gospel; to those that are in Prospe-
rity, and to those that are in Adversity;
to those that are Good, and to those
that are Evil. Do to us all whatever
thou knowest to be most needful for
us, to carry us safely through the Temp-
tations, and Dangers, and Miseries of
this Life, that at length we may arrive
at thy heavenly Kingdom, where with
Angels and Archangels, and all the Com-
pany of Heaven, we may sing Praises
and Hallelujahs to Father, Son, and
Holy Ghost, for ever and ever. Grant
this, O most gracious God, for the sake
of thy dear Son JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

8 SE 60
THE END.